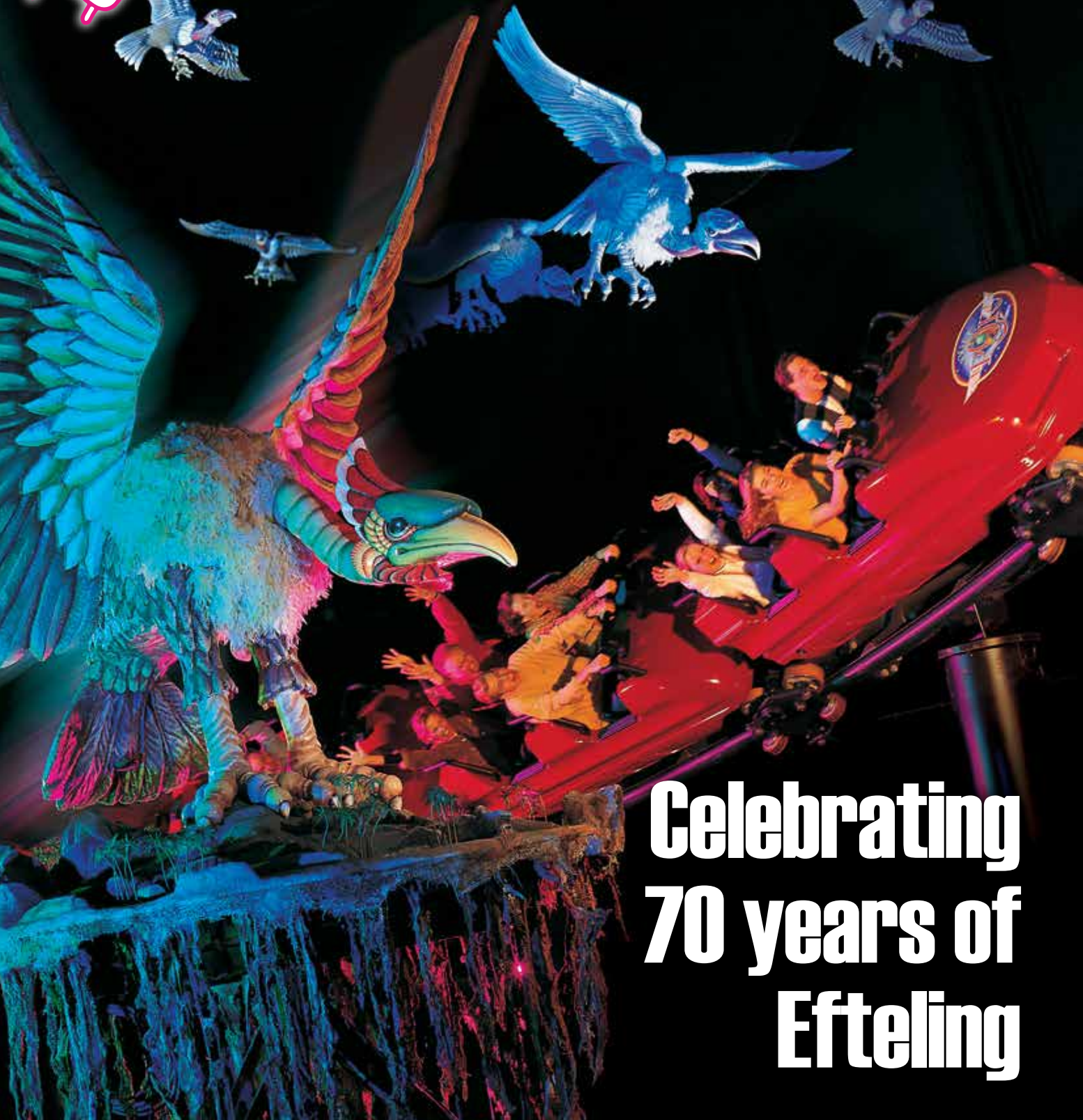


May/June 2022

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Celebrating 70 years of Efteling

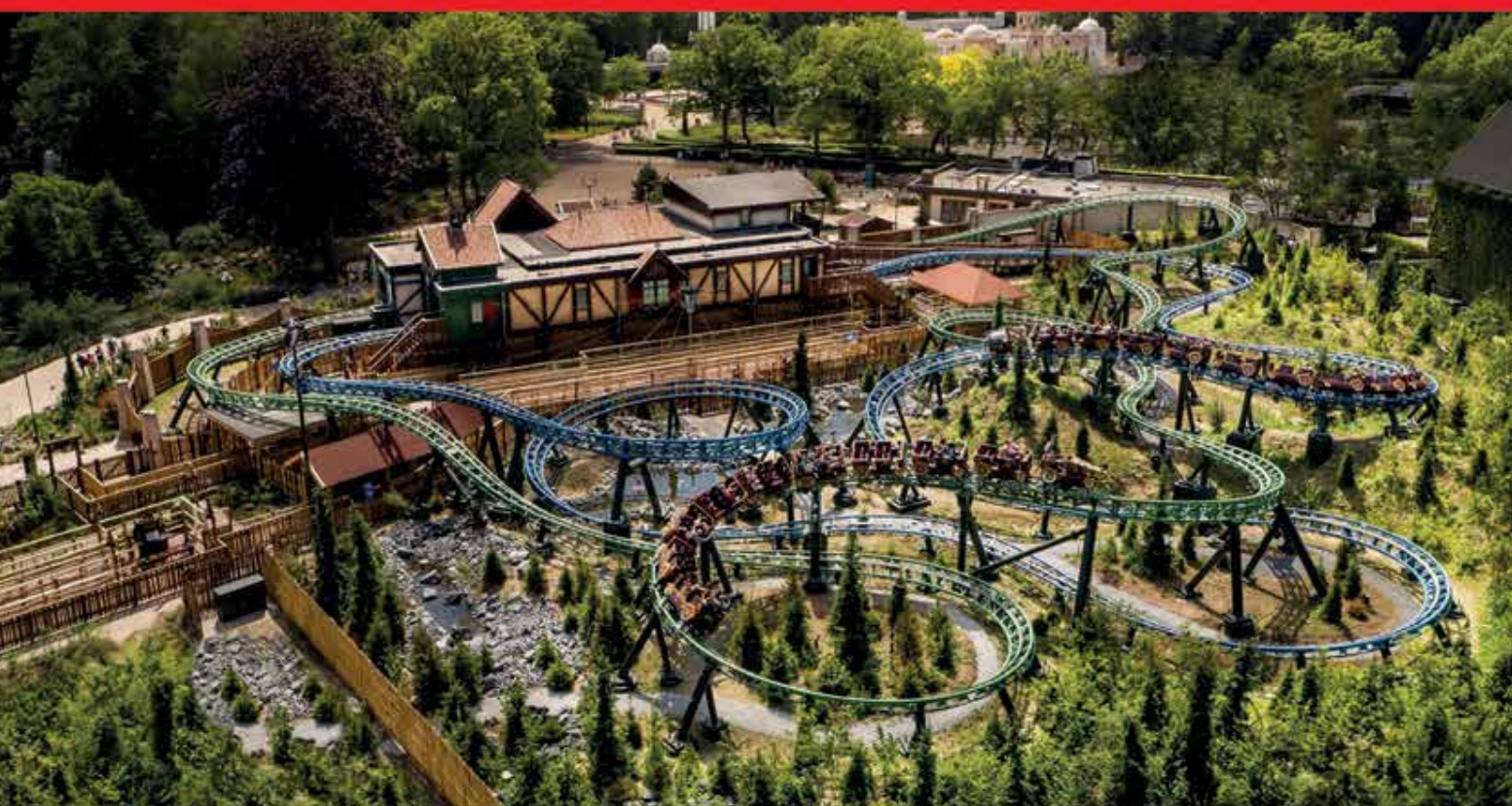
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Feature
Accessibility in parks
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Project Profile
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On the front cover:
Efteling's Vogel Rok dark ride.

Welcome to the May/June issue of InterPark magazine.

Accessibility for All

With the recent opening of Peppa Pig theme park and Sesame Place in the US, which have both been accredited as certified autism centres, our main feature this issue takes a more in-depth look at what the industry is doing to ensure guests enjoy as full an experience as possible, no matter what their needs.

Whether it's providing sensory rooms, or online accessibility guides, queue passes, or making rides more wheelchair friendly – the attractions industry has a responsibility to ensure all guests get the chance to experience the joy that locations can bring and it's pleasing to see how this is at the forefront of park operation team agendas. I also spoke with several manufacturers to see how their rides, attractions and systems can be adapted to ensure a user-friendly experience for all. To read the full story, turn to page 26 for more.

This month's Open to Question interview saw me sit down with San Diego Zoo's Erika Kohler who has recently been appointed Executive Director. We discussed how she plans to move the zoo forward and what it means to be only the second woman in the zoo's 106-year-history, to hold the position. Our cover story this issue focuses on the enchanting fairytale theme park, Efteling in the Netherlands, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. Packed with shows and rides that take inspiration from childhood tales written by famous authors Efteling first opened its doors back in 1952 and with a long and colourful history, is now the largest theme park in the Netherlands, as well as the third-largest theme park in Europe. For 70 years, Efteling has been a special world of wonders where visitors are immersed in fairytales, stories, and legends. For 2022, as part of its jubilee anniversary celebrations, Efteling has added a very special temporary fairytale to its list of story-themed attractions, which is inspired by the British children's novel Alice in Wonderland. You can read the full Park Life article on page 38.

Our next issue will be dedicated to our annual Buyer's Guide so if you would like to be involved with a listing, please feel free to get in touch via: editor@interpark.co.uk

Beth Whitaker **Editor**

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New Dark Ride offering through Boldmove Nation and Triotech

Boldmove Nation and Triotech have joined forces to deliver an interactive media-based dark ride at French theme park Le PAL. The ride will be known as Smash & Reload.

Le PAL is the only park in the country to combine a theme park with a zoo. It has over 1,000 animals with 31 attractions.

Arnaud Bennet, President of Le PAL, explains their choice: "It was time to replace our aging 4D-cinema with an attraction to position us for the future and offer something totally different to our guests. We started scouting the market and it became rapidly clear that the solution offered by BoldMove and Triotech is the most suitable for an all-family immersive experience. It blends advanced technologies and gameplay into an enjoyable attraction for young and old, making it very inclusive. The story is built around fun mushrooms and mixes a lot of humour and a subtle sustainability message that perfectly adheres to our vision.

"Our relationship with the teams behind Smash & Reload is solid so we are very confident we will create an amazing attraction together!"

Smash & Reload is based on a dynamic global industry cooperation, bringing a strong industry expertise together in a unique media-based. The concept design by BoldMove's CEO & Founder Benoit Cornet is a synthesis of 20 years dark ride development and visitor experience analysis. It brings the dark ride to its very essence with a strong focus on family fun through a well-balanced mix of interactivity, storytelling and IP use. The IP license TooMush is produced by the French graphic studio Polymorph and will be declined and adapted to Smash & Reload in a co-development between BoldMove and Polymorph.

The ride system and interactivity are produced by Triotech, a market leader in interactive attractions.

Ernest Yale, Triotech CEO and Founder stated: "We have been leaders in interactive attractions for over two decades and this collaboration with BoldMove brings the strength of both organisations together for the benefit of our clients, and ultimately for the park guests."



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EUROPE



Historic Ferris Wheel takes landmark leap of faith

A historic Ferris wheel in Vienna, Austria will hit new heights for its new high walk attraction this Spring. Lamac, which runs the Austrian attraction, is to appoint a tour guide who will give visitors a unique glimpse of the city from above with this novel concept.

It is a modern-day twist for the Wiener Riesenrad, as is its name in Austrian, or Vienna Giant Ferris Wheel. The attraction is a point of reference for visitors both far and wide. It dates all the way back to 1897 and has been in operation for 125 years. The daring Ferris wheel was designed by British engineers Harry Hitchens and Hubert Cecil Booth and was originally opened in celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Emperor Franz Josef I.

The building of the Austrian attraction was a feat of engineering and transporting its axis to the current site was challenging. According to the history of the build, 'the wheels of the carriage that transported the axis from the railway station to the building site of the Giant Ferris Wheel and which was drawn by 16 horses, sank into the soft ground of the Prater and had to be freed with a special hoisting apparatus before further transport was possible.'

Later, a track capable of bearing this weight was constructed along the entire route so that the axis could be safely moved. Steam-powered cranes then raised the axis to its final height of 33.5-metres over the inclined plane of two pylons and then embedded it into the two bearings mentioned.

Thanks to the marvellous work of its constructors, guests today will be able to look down on the city through a transparent glass surface - to a spectacular view of 64-metres (212ft).

The Vienna Giant Wheel has 15 gondolas in total along with the novel walk-on area for guests to sample what life was like for constructors to build the attraction. For further context, the ride used to have 30 gondolas when it was originally made. It was downsized to the actual number due to safety regulations. The attraction is highly popular for transporting guests above the Vienna skyline and over the Prater amusement park - of which the Giant Wheel is its centrepiece experience. It takes 20 minutes to make one full swing and at night is lit up in red and white in honour of the Austrian flag. And a novel experience can be found in gondola number 30, which is decorated for weddings and special events.

The attraction will this year spin in a new direction with the creation of The Wheel of History exhibition repassing the storied history of this attraction and detailing its wheel of time through eras such as the Roman and Middle Ages to the World Exhibition and hosting Venice in Vienna.

A representative of the attraction commented: "For over a century now the Giant Ferris Wheel has been turning high above Vienna, offering a spectacular view of the city on the Danube. The wheel has become an unmistakable symbol of the city, visible from far away for locals and visitors alike. Now another wheel turns at its feet: The Wheel of History - illustrated through the Panorama exhibition.

"This exhibition revives age-old Prater traditions through the help of ingenious artistic and technical audio-visual installations in eight cabins. This is not a museum, but a stage, a stage of history. The exhibition takes on 2,000 years of the city's history and stories about the Prater."

The wheel has a fame of its own - featuring in various background shots for series and movies, including the 1987 James Bond Film 'The Living Daylights'. For those who brave the Vienna Giant Ferris Wheel, they will be taking a leap of faith of a lifetime.





Maurer Rides launches revolutionary Spike snow coaster

German coaster manufacturer Maurer Rides has created the Spike snow coaster for ski resorts and mountain resorts. This winter wonderland caters for various thrilling elements, including airtime over snow-covered hills, long curves over lakes, a non-inverted loop and even a reverse roll-back element over the mountain.

Maurer Rides has created a revolutionary motorised snowmobile to ride around its track - making for an interactive snow coaster. The roller coaster is ideally made for ski areas, resorts and holiday destinations in the mountains as well as traditional theme parks. Its snowy winter landscape features are sure to give a fun ride on-board its snowmobile with the twist of its backwards roll from the rock face.

Spike's technical specifications include 100% traction at every point of the track. Each rider controls their own speed - up to 80 km/h (50mph), be it accelerating up the hill to extend the airtime or braking to enjoy the mountain scenery. Its track length is 550-metres with a height of 22-metres. There are six vehicles in all with a capacity of 600 passengers per hour. The modern version of the gear drive also gives operators 100% control with precise position of its vehicles at all times. The cutting-edge roller coaster can recover braking energy by means of recuperation to be used again on the next incline.



The Ellipse Flyer takes flight to grand heights

German manufacturer Zierer has created a new concept ride, named The Ellipse Flyer. The new ride promises 'an innovative and top-class ride.' Riders looking to experience The Ellipse Flyer can expect an adrenaline-fueled flight of being suspended with horizontal rotating seats and elliptical rotation with a high level of zero gravity produced.

The ride consists of four gondolas and holds space for 32 passengers with the added option of artificial smoke creating the illusion of being part of a giant engine in motion.

"The Ellipse Flyer, according to our objectives, shall enrich the worldwide landscape of amusement parks by furnishing an exciting new innovation to their attractions", says Zierer managing director Martin Weichselgartner. A ride on the Ellipse Flyer will be a turbulent experience in its literal sense."

The ride aims to give passengers a view to a thrill but in a smooth way, as Weichselgartner adds: "Once passengers are seated in the Ellipse Flyer's ergonomic, foam cushioned seats and their safety bars are closed, a hydraulic system will then lower the boarding platform and the gondola arms begin to swing the gondola units via a frame construction, slowly back and forth. The four gondolas meanwhile also begin to rotate.

"Our passengers will reach the highest elliptical rotation point of the ride after a few swings of the gondola arms followed by an entire rotation with an increasing sense of zero gravity. Rotations in both directions become possible by also having the gondolas moving down backwards when they are halting at the top position. The four gondolas, each composed of eight seats, would rotate horizontally and allow for a breathtaking panoramic view in three dimensions of movement.

"As a special highlight feature, the Ellipse Flyer's gondola arms can be stopped at a height of approximately 10-metres (32ft) and provide a 360° all-round view of the entire amusement park and its surrounding landscape area as the gondolas would continue with their horizontal rotation."

The ride manufacturer offers "unlimited possibilities" for its new product. According to Zierer: "The design of the Ellipse Flyer can also be freely executed according to the customer's wishes. The company's creative department already holds a variety of concept drawings for realising the ride in underwater and jungle settings. Zierer artists have even been considering the idea of working on a ride design with a Wild West theme."



Abu Dhabi opens largest aquarium in Middle East

The largest aquarium in the Middle East opened last November to the public. The landmark aquatic attraction is based in Al Qana, Abu Dhabi, an emerging tourist destination. The National Aquarium covers 5500m² with 60 exhibits to marvel.

At the National Aquarium, visitors will take in displays such as the Red Sea Wreck where they can find out about the red sea's biodiversity. The Ring of Fire will put guests in the heart of the action by experiencing a volcanic cave. Meanwhile, Ocean Magic reveals some of the treasured secrets of the ocean. The centrepiece attraction of the National Aquarium is Bu Tinah Island. Here, guests will be able to see the sea life at close quarters with a tunnel of 55-metres in length and 5000m³ volume. Guests visiting can also experience ancillary features of the National Aquarium such as cruising along a Dhow tour and see fish close-up with its glass bottom flooring.

The wellbeing of marine life is paramount to the National Aquarium - made clear through a partnership with the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi to highlight The Wildlife Rescue programme the aquarium runs. The mission is to rescue, rehabilitate and release native wildlife in the Abu Dhabi Emirate as the aquarium aims to preserve and conserve its treasured marine life for future generations.

Paul Hamilton, General Manager of The National Aquarium - Abu Dhabi, gave *InterPark* further insight.

InterPark: Tell us what guests can expect from their visit?

Paul Hamilton: "The National Aquarium - Abu Dhabi (TNA) is the Middle East's largest aquarium. That is not to say that guests will only see marine life; with over 10 thematic zones that are home to more than 46,000 animals, visitors can 'trek' through the ocean, the arctic, and the jungle, encountering animals from the Arabian Gulf and beyond. "Additionally, with education at our core, we've developed several



immersive implementations that make TNA both educational and entertaining for children. For instance, our recently launched, Junior Marine Biologist Program allows children to step into the shoes of a marine biologist and learn everything they need to know about animal care. Activities like this make TNA a great place for parents to bring their children to have a fun family day away from the hustle and bustle of daily life."

IP: What more can you tell us about Bu Tinah Island?

PH: "Bu Tinah Island is located in the Marawah Marine Biosphere Reserve, the region's largest and first UNESCO-designated marine biosphere reserve. Recognised as one of the seven wonders of the world, the island marine reserve is home to the second largest population of Dugongs, a large marine mammal that is globally threatened.

"Our Bu Tinah zone at TNA is a vast and thriving collection of sea creatures that peacefully co-exist among similar shallow waters, sea grass beds, tall mangroves, and extensive coral reefs. We encourage everyone to come to The National Aquarium and see our representation of Bu Tinah Island in all its glory."

IP: What were the challenges of this project?

PH: "From start to finish, TNA was a three-year project in the making. We take pride in the fact that all our animals have been responsibly and ethically sourced, however this meant overcoming several obstacles, which delayed our grand opening. In addition, disruption to global supply chains due to the pandemic caused further delays with animal transport."

IP: And how important is working with the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi?

PH: "The marine environment is a vital resource for life on earth. It performs key functions like climate regulation, preventing erosion, and maintaining biological control.

"The Wildlife Rescue Program, a joint collaboration between the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD) and The National Aquarium (TNA), is one of mutual benefit. Our joint effort aims to rescue, rehabilitate, and release native wildlife in Abu Dhabi. Last year alone we released over 150 turtles back into the sea and this year we will be releasing another large batch of rescue sea turtles as well. EAD is the Middle East's largest environmental regulator, TNA is the Middle East's largest aquarium, and our objectives closely align."

IP: What are the projected annual visitor numbers?

PH: "Since our opening in November 2021, we have already welcomed well over 100,000 guests. We have several exciting developments in our pipeline over the coming months which will cater to people of all ages. With this in mind, we are sure to be welcoming many more visitors throughout the rest of 2022."



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Velocity speeds into Abu Dhabi with giant slides

The Mall at World Trade Centre, Abu Dhabi, has launched its new slide named Velocity. The thrilling indoor attraction has two separate chutes - both made from stainless steel. The shorter slide measures 54-metres while the longer one is 68-metres. Velocity breaks the record for the longest and tallest stainless-steel chutes in the Middle East.

German manufacturer Wiegand Slide is the brainchild of the attraction and, as the name suggests, Velocity takes travellers along its journey at speed, from 2 - 3-metres per second to be exact. Guests entering the shiny silver tube will take in a great view, starting their aquatic journey on the third floor of the mall and snaking all the way down to the ground floor.

Riders will see every step of the way as Velocity is fitted with transparent fibreglass technology. And the view of the entire mall is the reward for the brave passengers venturing Velocity. The attraction is a spectacular adventure with the ride's thrill elements of its steep drop and many twists and turns. The ride has a novel touch with multi-coloured LED lights fitted for special events.



It represents the latest sliding adventure for the vastly experienced German company, which first created a summer toboggan in 1975, and which still operates today. Since then, it has produced versatile and innovative products from the mountain ranges of China and European theme parks to American ski areas, playgrounds, cruise ships and shopping malls.

Abu Dhabi Natural History Museum primed for 2025 opening

A cutting-edge museum in the Middle East has been unveiled to be ready by the middle of this decade. Plans were revealed this Spring for the Natural History Museum to be located on the Saadiyat Island of Abu Dhabi. The museum will focus on the natural history dating back 13.8 billion years and its showpiece attraction will be a 36ft long Tyrannosaurus Rex, which lived 67 million years ago.

Not only will the focus be on fossils, historic relicts and natural history artefacts, the museum will explore how we can create a sustainable future for Planet Earth - with a huge focus on empowering and inspiring younger generations. The vision of the Natural History Museum will become a reality through the eyes of a partnership between the Department of Culture and Tourism Abu Dhabi and Miral, which is a market leader for Abu Dhabi's flagship creations in visitor experience destinations.

The proposed museum will be located in a huge building covering a 35,000sqm space. It will be designed by architects at Mecanoo, who have the aim to design the museum with features of natural rock formations. This will be in-keeping with the focus of the museum to be able to connect the people of Abu Dhabi and tourists with the natural world.

But what can visitors expect from the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi? His Excellency

Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of DCT Abu Dhabi gave some clues to its reality:

"Natural history has a new home in Abu Dhabi. A new museum, which tells the story of our universe through some of the most incredible natural



wonders known to mankind. These are awe-inspiring gifts from nature that we are proud to share with the world - unlocking millions of years of knowledge to not only advance scientific discovery but to inspire our children to protect our planet's future.

"As we nurture a new generation of global advocates that are incredibly curious and passionate about natural history, we are fulfilling our vision to enrich lives and make Abu Dhabi the place for research, collaboration and discovery."

Image: National History Museum



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Silvergate Media unveils Octonauts activity trail

Merlin Entertainments is sure to cause a splash with its latest aquatic attraction of The Octonauts Great Gup Rescue Trail, opening in Sea Life Centres this Spring. The immersive attraction will be created through a partnership formed by Silvergate Media and Merlin Entertainments, which have joined forces on this new activity trail experience. The attraction was first opened at Sea Life Mall of America on 10 March before beginning its voyage to Sea Life Centres across the world.

Silvergate's new interactive activity-based Octonauts trail allows visitors to embark on a fun journey to complete missions and save the sea creatures. The Great Gup Rescue features Gups (the Octonauts' aquatic vehicles) with guests able to choose from various characters such as Captain Barnacles, Kwazii, Shellington and Dashi. Once the cast is set to go, its guests will be able to navigate through a series of obstacles and challenges. The activity trail starts with an underwater storm that has caused major electrical problems and has caused the Gups to break down. This leads all the Gups to unite and follow the trail to a path of success. Families will be able to experience the activity trail throughout the site where they can help save the day and become a hero in the rescue.

"I'm always looking for exciting experiences for our guests at Sea Life at Mall of America and we are thrilled to have The Great Gup Rescue," said general manager Trisha Ruf. "This partnership will spark even more imagination, adventure and wonder with guests at Sea Life Aquariums here in Minnesota and worldwide."

Meanwhile, Lisa Macdonald, SVP Content and Consumer Product Sales



Image Credit © Silvergate Media (The Great Gup Rescue Octonauts)

at Silvergate Media, commented: "We are thrilled to be introducing the new Octonauts activity trail at Sea Life centres. Children will have the opportunity to become truly immersed in their own Octonauts adventure and live experiences that deliver on both fun and education."

This new adventure holds a serious message of course with the clear aim to educate and inspire guests about important conservation topics as well as attracting new visitors to Sea Life centres across the world. The Octonauts activity trail joins an expanding portfolio of global live event partnerships from Silvergate, which continues to build on its long-standing partnership, that includes the world's biggest Octonauts attraction at Merlin's Changfeng Ocean World in Shanghai.

Pantheon opens at Busch Gardens Williamsburg

The world's fastest multi LSM launch coaster has opened at Busch Gardens Williamsburg, USA. Pantheon was created by expert ride constructors Intamin; this record-breaking coaster will be the star attraction at Busch Gardens this season and for good reason. Its technical specifications read a height of 55-metres (180ft) with its track length spanning 1000-metres (3280ft). The thrill ride has a top speed of approximately 73mph (117 km/h), which is reached after a steep 95° vertical drop.

A park representative said of its new Roman-God themed ride: "Pantheon is one of the world's most anticipated coasters of 2022 and is now open in the park's Festa Italia village, elevating Busch Gardens Williamsburg's portfolio to eight world-class coasters that are sure to delight even the most daring thrill-seekers."

The attraction has many hallmark features along its golden track. There are four launches, of which three are forward and one is backward, five airtime hills and two inversions. Riders will enjoy the roll-back and roll-over elements to give a hearty variety of fun adrenaline spots. The coaster consists of two 20-seater themed amber and blue tinted trains with ergonomically shaped seats and over-the-shoulder-lap-bars for its riders with comfort being key.

The name of the coaster derives from the five Roman Gods of Pluto, Neptune, Mercury, Minerva and Jupiter. According to the park, "Each god represents a different aspect of the ride: Pluto represents the two inversions, Minerva the launches and boosts, Mercury stands for speed, Neptune for height and Jupiter represents the drop."



Image Credit © SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment

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Image Credit © WhiteWater

WhiteWater strikes fruitful environmental partnership with Swim Drink Fish

WhiteWater has announced a partnership with Swim Drink Fish, a Canadian environment charity raising awareness of safe and healthy waters. The agreement, signed on World Water Day held on 22 March, is a corporate sponsorship partnership to further highlight the importance of environmental sustainability.

This partnership is part of WhiteWater's Sustainability Scorecard - a holistic approach to environmental sustainability that includes participation in initiatives beyond the attractions industry. It aims to donate 1% of corporate profits each year to a water-based NGO with the clear aim of cleaning up the waters for everyone to enjoy.

"Swim Drink Fish is the right fit for WhiteWater because both our organisations are all about people enjoying and celebrating water," said Una deBoer, WhiteWater's Chief Marketing Officer. "We wanted to find a charity that is local yet internationally involved too. "Everyone has a right to swimmable, drinkable, fishable water and the path to start restoring and protecting our waters is by recognising the meaningful ways we connect to them."

The movement involves building relationships and working with indigenous communities, to address complex environmental issues. Swim Drink Fish has four offices in Canada and its presence is felt globally with initiatives active in 171 communities and 11 countries. One of the initiatives is of particular interest to WhiteWater: "WhiteWater's sponsorship is directly cleaning up waterways through Swim Drink Fish's Vancouver Plastic Cleanup," said Sadie Caron, Fraser Riverkeeper and Program Manager for Swim Drink Fish. "Swim Drink Fish is installing, maintaining, and overseeing multiple Seabin trash trapping devices in Vancouver to engage in a waste characterisation, plastic education, and advocacy project. This is made possible with the support from WhiteWater."



There are currently 860 seabins in operation across the world with four of them in Vancouver. As part of the agreement, there will be more seabins being created and maintained in the region.

While WhiteWater has lot of experience in its field of award-winning attractions ranging from slides to water rides, it is not just its attractions which are of paramount importance to the company but its social responsibility to safeguard the environment too. WhiteWater demonstrates this through its employees, who are encouraged to actively engage in being actively mindful of environmental wellbeing. In addition to participating in charitable events throughout the year, the company has adopted the river trail next to its corporate headquarters where employees take turns to remove rubbish waste to prevent it from landing in the water. All these steps are taken by WhiteWater to ensure its activities are climate neutral by 2040.

Meanwhile, Swim Drink Fish takes great pride in its environmental activities. Its initiatives offer several volunteer opportunities, for example, regular water sampling, waste characterisation, major beach clean-ups, and fundraising events.

Both organisations are doing their bit to clean up communities to ultimately create a healthier and environmentally cleaner planet.

George Walker appointed Holovis Vice President Creative Development



George Walker

Holovis, which designs and installs experiential solutions for global themed entertainment and visitor attractions, welcomes George Walker into this new role.

Walker brings with him a long history of creative development experience, having started his career building themed miniature golf courses and FECs over two decades ago. His more recent roles have included responsibilities as Creative Director for Universal Studios Creative Studio in Orlando, and Creative Executive for Dynamic Attractions. Notably, he has been the brains behind the successful Ferrari World expansion.

Walker will be tasked with leading and expanding the company's Creative Services and working with the existing team of visionary designers and solution architects who create some of the world's most exciting attractions and experiences. Based at the Holovis Innovation Centre in Orlando, FL, Walker will be in-situ at the heart of the theme park industry leading the creative design, combined with technology integration, around next generation attractions.

Upon his appointment, he said: "I am so excited to be teaming up with such a cutting-edge company that has always managed to innovate and problem-solve. I have been constantly impressed with its ability to get things done and push the limits, whilst always championing the guest experience and the clients' master plan - all in a way that is truly rare in our industry. I see this as the perfect opportunity to build on that momentum together and take Holovis to a whole new level."

Holovis CEO Stuart Hetherington welcomed Walker to the company: "We cannot wait to apply George's creative mind and visionary ideas into current and future projects. We are known for merging the best of technology with immersive storytelling, which is exactly what George excels at."



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ADG unveils new coasters

ADG Mountainsides, a division of ADG, has announced three new roller coaster installations are to be contracted this year.

The new rides will be located across both Western Canada and in Southwestern United States. All three roller coasters are scheduled to be open for late 2022 or early 2023.

Since it was established in 2010, ADG Mountainsides has over 30 ride installations across North America. One of its star attractions is The Cliffside Coaster, which opened at Lake Placid US Olympic Venue in October 2020. At 7,000ft long, it takes the title of the longest mountain coaster in North America and travels alongside the 1980 Olympic bobsled track. One of the most noteworthy features of the ADG Mountain Coaster includes a timed on-board audio system that allows visitors to experience the thrills of what it was like to be an Olympic bobsledder during the 1980 Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid.

Riders are encouraged to 'Get on the ride that is sweeping the nation' as ADG leads the way in its chosen field. A spokesperson for ADG commented on their ethos: "From technologically advanced mountain coasters and slides to full-blown indoor and outdoor water parks featuring state-of-the-

art attractions, ADG is perfectly positioned to help turn a scenic mountain range into a four-season recreational destination, appealing to a broad demographic."

Advancements in key technologies have set the industry standard for roller coaster safety and guest satisfaction and ADG's latest advancement brings the novelty of audio to the mountain. ADG's on-board advanced audio system is the first-of-its kind technology that allows operators to add music, custom narration and a themed experience all signalled by a positioning system for location triggered audio communication.

The Olympic Site in Lake Placid, NY was ADG's latest coaster installation and features ADG's latest On-Board Audio System. At 7,600ft (2316m) in length, this roller coaster took the title of longest in North America.

Another unique innovation to ADG's Mountain Coaster is the proprietary 'bolt-up' track installation system. Mountain track sections arrive on site pre-assembled ready to be installed - meaning less time working on a mountain and more time dedicated to ride. And with a higher ground-to-track clearance, the ADG Mountain Coaster can perform in most weather conditions.

The Mountain Coaster by ADG offers several benefits. ADG's ride plans maximise the terrain to create more twists, turns, zigs, zags and rolling dips. And its SmartCart technology utilises the latest in cutting-edge technologies, including its Position Monitoring System, and ComfortSeat design, creating a better ride experience for its travelling guests.

"ADG's exceptional project management and oversight of the installation process was integral in enabling our coaster to get up and running a month earlier than anticipated, allowing us to capture some key revenue generation in the busy fall season," said Elise Ruocco, Communications Director at Lake Placid Olympic Authority.



Images: ADG

Legoland Florida Resort earns Certified Autism Centre Designation



Images: Legoland Florida

Legoland Florida Resort has become one of the first theme park resorts in the US to become a Certified Autism Center (CAC). This Resort-wide CAC designation recognises all Legoland related rides and attractions.

The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) awards the CAC certification to organisations completing guest-facing staff training and certification.

IBCCES conducted an onsite review resort-wide to provide additional recommendations and options for autistic visitors and their families, and sensory guides to help guests understand and plan for the sensory impacts of each ride or attraction.

As a Certified Autism Center, Legoland Florida Resort can now provide trained, helpful, front-line team members equipped to better assist autistic guests or those with other sensory sensitivities and help them enjoy their time at the resort. The resort can also provide a sensory guide for every attraction that provides insight into how the attraction or ride may be affected by each of the five senses to make it easier for individuals and families to plan activities that align with their needs. Read more about Legoland's recent accessibility work in this issue's main feature starting on page 26.



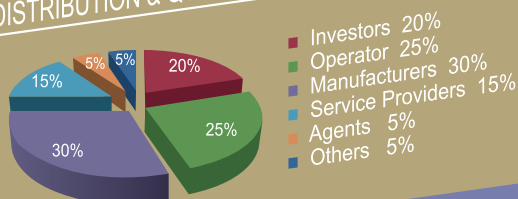
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In Focus | Taylor Jeffs, President of Legacy Entertainment

South Korea's latest Lotte World Adventure theme park opens its doors in Busan.

Taylor Jeffs, president and chief creative officer of Legacy Entertainment, the Hollywood-based entertainment design firm behind Lotte World Adventure Busan, exclusively spoke with **InterPark** about the company's role in the new park.

InterPark: What were the challenges of creating Lotte World Busan?

Taylor Jeffs: Busan, while being a great market, is a regional market, nonetheless. The original Lotte World in Seoul is world-class in every way, so how do you deliver upon the colossal expectations that the Lotte World brand carries with it for a fraction of the budget? Part of the answer was to do something completely fresh and new that wouldn't bear any resemblance, nor hopefully draw direct comparisons, to the original flagship. This also led to the design challenge of figuring out what an all-new Lotte World would look and feel like. We departed from the original park's international theme, and instead created a complimentary set of fantasy realms that should hopefully be both transportive and timeless.

IP: What is the highlight attraction of the park?

TJ: Despite being a boutique regional park, Lotte World Adventure Busan is home to some pretty dramatic rides and attractions. The most attention-grabbing is the 'giant' family of attractions which includes a Mack Launch Coaster, Mack Power Splash, and Zamperla Giant Discovery. Beyond that, we anticipate guest favourites will include a large flume from ABC Rides, which is uniquely integrated into the park, as well as Asia's first Roller Coaster Restaurant.



Images Credit © Legacy Entertainment

IP: How long did the project take to build?

TJ: From concept to opening, the process was approximately five years.

IP: How was it to build with an ongoing pandemic?

TJ: The pandemic posed a wide array of challenges from product lead time to commissioning of key attractions, all of which ultimately were surmountable with the assistance of local authorities.



IP: How many visitors is the new park aiming to attract annually?

TJ: Once fully built out, the park is designed to host two million visitors annually. However, given the uncertainty over when nearby countries may re-open international travel, it may take a few years to achieve this target.

IP: What would you say are the park's main USPs?

TJ: Our big goal with Lotte World Adventure Busan was to redefine what a regional park could be in its opening year. In nearly 20 years of focusing on the Asian market, I've toured countless brand-new theme parks that, despite sporting healthy budgets, were completely depressing. This inspired us to create something that was more in the spirit of Europe's many wonderful smaller parks where, yes, the rides are important, but they're just one piece of a much larger equation. In addition to a Disney-style 'Spoke and Hub' layout, visitors will discover a park in which charming, human-scale environments take precedence over colossal theming, and where the many gardens, terraces, and fountain-lined promenades lead to all manner of discovery and surprises.

Lotte World Adventure Busan covers 25 acres with six themed worlds: Tinker Falls, Rainbow Springs, Wonder Woods, Queen Lorry's Royal Garden,

Joyful Meadows and Underland. The park makes a notable contrast with the grey-toned architecture of Busan's urban districts and has been designed with a multi-coloured garden aesthetic of spacious landscapes and eye-catching water features.



Record local visitor numbers at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort

Hong Kong Disneyland Resort has seen exponential growth in spite of the pandemic. Its recent business results were published for the fiscal year 2021 and confirmed that the resort's local attendance increased by 117% year-on-year.

Meanwhile, its annual pass membership base, known as Magic Access, also expanded by 55%. Local young adult attendance also hit a record high with the student Magic Access increasing by 132% from the previous fiscal year. The worldwide pandemic has seen tourism dramatically fall in the last two years. However, Hong Kong Disneyland's overall attendance grew to 2.8 million - an increase of 64% year-on-year. The resort also saw its financial stock grow by 19% to HK\$1.7bn (£165m).

"HKDL made deliberate efforts to preserve jobs in FY21, and thanks to our cast members' dedication and resilience, we continued to deliver exceptional guest satisfaction and positive results with local guests," said Michael Moriarty, managing director at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort. "We are cautiously optimistic in our outlook ahead of the future gradual resumption of inbound tourism. Our new Castle of Magical Dreams, which has yet to be experienced by guests from outside of Hong Kong, as well as our daytime show 'Follow Your Dreams' and upcoming night-time spectacular 'Momentous', will be key drivers for local as well as inbound visitation in coming years."

Hong Kong Disneyland has gone to great lengths to ensure both its staff and visitors are safe during this challenging period. At the end of 2021, 93% of the park's full-time cast members had received two doses of vaccine and Hong Kong Disneyland has said it will continue to comply with the latest regulations including the vaccine pass requirements. This continued effort and measured approach has earned the trust from guests. It has also received exceptional guest satisfaction ratings. At the end of last year, 94% of surveyed park guests said their overall experience was excellent, very good or good with 97% feeling that their park visits gave them tranquillity.

Hong Kong Disneyland has shown that it is committed to contributing to Hong Kong and serving the local community. In the past 16 years of operations combined, the resort brought approximately HK\$115.3bn (£11.2bn) of value-added wealth to Hong Kong's economy - equivalent to 0.29% of Hong Kong's GDP. The resort created 274,200 jobs, which benefited Hong Kong's overall economy. On average, Hong Kong Disneyland employed around 5,000 full-time and over 1,200 part-time staff during its 2021 season to remain one of Hong Kong's largest employers in the tourism and family entertainment industry. Over the last 16 years, its initiative called Disney VolunteARS provided a total of 111,000 volunteer hours in the community.

Meanwhile, this past year, inbound tourism into Hong Kong has essentially remained on pause due to the ongoing travel restrictions imposed under



Credit © Hong Kong Disneyland Resort

the worldwide pandemic. Overall, the travel industry has continued to be hard-hit, meaning that the city's tourism destinations, including Hong Kong Disneyland, have continued to face a challenging business and operating environment.

However, the resort continues to thrive under these challenging times and is progressively looking forward. As a result, Hong Kong Disneyland Resort is gearing for a first-of-its-kind night-time spectacular, which will keep its positive momentum and attract more visitors in 2022. This new night-time spectacular called Momentous will be launched later this year with the Castle of Magical Dreams as its backdrop, along with a series of other new offerings to enhance the guest experience and boost visitor numbers.

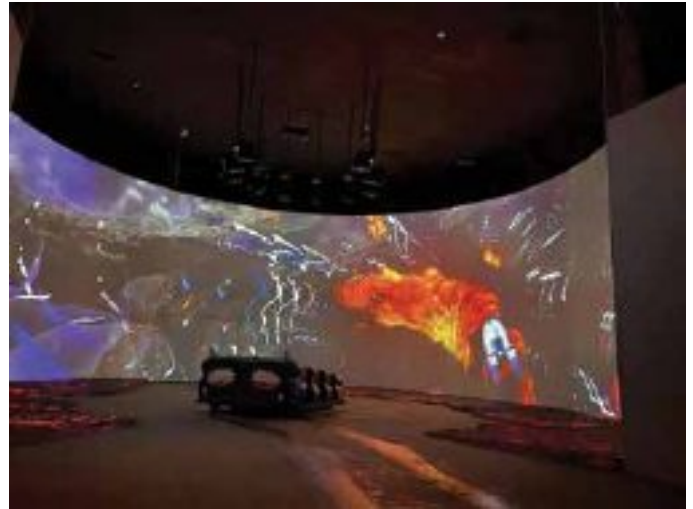
Jinma Rides' A.D. 10,000 makes global debut

Jinma Rides debuted its milestone AGV trackless and driverless immersive dark ride, A.D. 10,000 at Bailuyuan Studios Park, China, on 23 April.

As the leading AGV trackless dark ride supplier from China, Jinma Rides has integrated numerous advanced technologies into the ride, from its control system to laser navigation and real-time data control.

The entire control system has been developed by Jinma Rides, with the vehicle applying laser navigation and precise positioning technology. It also uses real-time data to control the movement of the vehicles. Two independent steering wheels work through the control system, and the vehicle is untethered in movement according to the set trajectory path. The light and compact structure of the vehicle is also convenient for moving in small spaces. The turning radius is small enough that even right-angle turns are possible.

The trackless systems also allow for much more complex set pieces, such as swinging, rotating, and swapping places with each vehicle, making them especially suitable for highly immersive experiences. This project innovatively added the dynamic experiences of a high-speed diving section and a 6 DOF platform, which makes the experience more memorable and unique.



Jinma Rides continues to ramp up R&D in immersive attractions that integrate the ride system with various effects, including lights, sounds, wind, and animation, in order to play out a story in the most vivid way. Jinma has supplied dozens of motion dark rides for its clients so far, with another dark ride planned for operation in Tai'an in 2023.



Credit © Triotech

Golden Crown Awarded to Triotech

Triotech has been recognised for its work in the Chinese industry by winning the prestigious Golden Crown Award for 'Outstanding Motion / Flying Theater Supplier' with the attractions' fitting at Happy Valley Tianjin, in association with the Overseas Chinese Town Group (OCT).

As one of the market leaders in digital interactive attractions, the company has scooped up this latest award on the back of its work with the 60-seater XD Theater, which opened last year. Over 40 films can be viewed as part of its programming schedule with leading motion technology and special effects. During the parks' peak season, it receives 5,000 daily

visitors, which doubles to 10,000 visitors during weekends. It is the 9th Triotech attraction which has been installed in Happy Valley theme parks throughout the country.

"We are honoured to receive this recognition," said Han Jie, Triotech's sales general manager for China. "Triotech will continue to develop more innovative products for the market and contribute to the overall recovery of the Chinese entertainment market."

Meanwhile, Equipment Director of Tianjin Happy Valley added: "It's a pleasure to cooperate with Triotech, which has helped and supported us a lot during installation. The support of Triotech engineers on site was very good and we are very thankful to them."

WATER PARKS



Polin's Plan for sustainability unveiled

"The Future is Green. So are we!" The words of Polin Waterparks in its quest to tackle sustainability and in light of the agreement accepted by all countries at the Paris Conference, organised by the United Nations, at the end of 2015. During those meetings, it was decided to limit global warming by 2° by the end of 100 years. With current policy standards, it is estimated this increase will reach 2.7°C by the end of 2100.

Dedicated to reducing its carbon emissions, a Polin spokesperson commented: "Our vision is for Polin Waterparks to have zero-emissions in terms of products and services for a sustainable world. As a global market leader in our industry and pioneer in innovation, since 2006 we have offered the closed mold manufacturing technology, Resin Transfer Molding (RTM) which is the first step towards more sustainable water slide manufacturing."

Furthermore, Polin has demonstrated work done in creating more environmentally friendly parks:

- 2006 - Using RTM Process in Waterslide Manufacturing
- 2007 - Spray up Slide Insulation for Low Energy Consumption
- 2008 - Eco-Friendly Material Development
- 2009 - New Portable Machine Room Development (Easytainer)
- 2010 - Energy Efficient Wave Pools and Rivers System
- 2013 - Completing RTM Line & New Factory Investments
- 2015 - Robotic Cutting Cells & Shedder Investments
- 2016 - Robotic Gelcoat Line
- 2018 - Fully Automatic Mold Machine Investments
- 2019 - Sustainability Project Branding (BRIGHT)
- 2021 - Launching BRIGHT (Low Emission Product Line & Solutions)



The BRIGHT project provides engineering solutions for sustainable facilities, integrated services for energy and water intelligence, consultancy services towards net-zero emissions, and green operation and monitoring services.

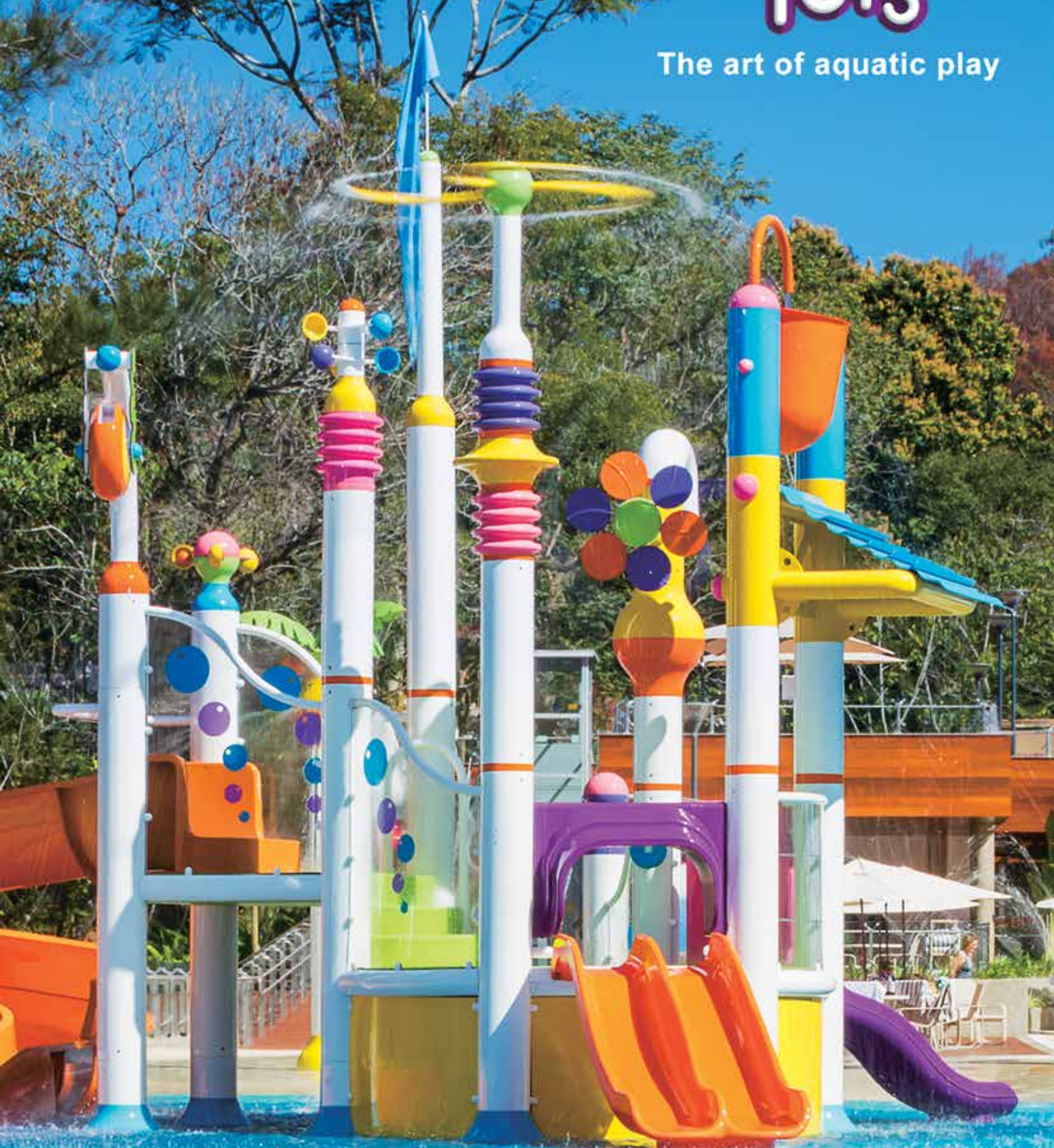
The water parks attraction company has delivered more than 3,000 water park projects in 109 countries worldwide. And the company wants to use its profile to further push the need to go green.

"Carbon-free entertainment parks will continue to be our priority for our future and our world," Polin concluded.





The art of aquatic play



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WATER PARKS



PROSLIDE TORNADO 60 + Tornado WAVE 60 Complex

Vietnam's largest water park opens

ProSlide Technology has worked with Suoi Tien Group to open Vietnam's largest water park - The Amazing Bay.

Located close to Ho Chi Minh City, The Amazing Bay uses a collection of the world's most awarded water rides to create a water park experience unique in the country.

The water park features 19 high-performance water rides supplied exclusively by ProSlide, making it the country's first 100% ProSlide water park, along with debuting the first ProSlide Surf in Asia.

"The guest experience created by the attractions is one of the most important drivers of water park success," says Nik Paas, ProSlide's regional vice president sales – Asia-Pacific.

"It was critical to collaborate on the right mix based on Suoi Tien's vision, expected demographics, and emerging market trends. We're proud to have been part of the initial concept phase for The Amazing Bay in 2016 all the way to the opening this year. Suoi Tien's goal has always been to create an unforgettable experience for its guests, and this will certainly achieve that, along with continuing to raise the bar in the Vietnam amusement and tourism industry."

The new Vietnamese park features signature award-winning ProSlide water rides including the iconic Tornado 60, the original Mammoth, and the revolutionary Tornado Wave.

Daniel Jackson, principal of ProSlide's Master Planning team added: "Concept design is the first step in every water park plan and it's crucial to the park's success. It's during this stage the fundamentals of a water park are established and the latest trends from leading water parks around the world are incorporated into the layout of the park."



PROSLIDE Behemoth BOWL 60+MAMMOTH



PROSLIDE Cannon BOWL 30



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- Efficient technology **reduces power usage**
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- Innovative design **diminishes water loss**
- Advanced propulsion **saves power and water**



Accessible for All

With the recent opening of Peppa Pig theme park and Sesame Place in the US, which have both been accredited as certified autism centres, *InterPark's* Editor, Beth Whitaker takes a closer look at what some of the leading parks and suppliers around the world are doing to ensure guests enjoy as full an experience as possible, no matter what their needs.

As featured in our Mar/Apr issue, **Peppa Pig theme park** in Orlando, Florida opened in February as a Certified Autism Center (CAC) and is aiming to be the ultimate theme park for all pre-schoolers, with enhanced ride and play accessibility.

Several attractions at the theme park have been designed to be enjoyed by children who use wheelchairs and the park's ride engineers partnered with manufacturer Techincal Park for Peppa Pig's Balloon Ride, to reimagine a balloon car that allows children who use wheelchairs to ride right up into the car with a ramp, requiring no need to transfer out of their wheelchairs. The ground at the Muddy Puddles Splash Pad is also specifically graded for wheelchairs and some of the features, including a colourful collection of water hoops, have been created with wheelchair users in mind.

Back on dry land, explorers will discover fun adventures that are sized with these same guiding principles of accessibility in mind. Children in wheelchairs are able to manoeuvre and explore the sensory-rich trail of Peppa's Pedal Bike Tour and the greenery-covered maze walls of George's Fort have also been mapped out to all ADA guidelines and standards.

So that guests can plan their day to the fullest, Peppa Pig theme park features an online Accessibility and Sensory Guide, which includes a sensory grading system for each of its rides and attractions covering touch, taste, sound, sight and smell so that guests can make informed decisions before heading to the theme park.

Located just steps away from Peppa Pig theme park is **Legoland Florida Resort**, which has also earned CAC status through Merlin Entertainment's ongoing partnership with the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). This designation extends to Legoland theme park, water park and the three onsite hotels and saw the entire team take part in sensitivity and awareness training.

Commenting on Legoland's commitment to inclusivity for all, the park's Kelly Hornick told *InterPark*: "Legoland Florida Resort is the family destination that is all about letting kids take the lead; everything we do is about the kids. When it comes to special needs considerations, if you want children to feel comfortable enough to have a great time, you must make it easy on the parents. Parents of children with special needs tend to be the best planners on the planet and knowing this, we strive to have as much information available online to help with that. We want them to feel comfortable and supported when they arrive at our parks."



Techincal Park reimaged a balloon car that allows wheelchair users to ride right up into the car with a ramp.

"We're always learning and it's our job to continue to be better at the design and experience of our attractions to help more families have truly awesome vacations. Our parks exist for families to have fun and build unforgettable memories. We strive to find ways to make those memory-building moments within reach to all families."

Over in California, **Sesame Place San Diego** is the only theme park on the West Coast of America based entirely on the award-winning television show Sesame Street and is now the first theme park in San Diego to open as a Certified Autism Center (CAC). The IBCCES granted the CAC designation following staff-wide training and certification and an on-site review.

"Sesame Place is a theme park designed for families with kids of all ages to laugh, learn and play while making fun and memorable moments regardless of any special needs," said Jim Lake, Sesame Place, park president. "This certification allows us to continue the legacy that Sesame Place Philadelphia began years ago in becoming the first theme park in the world to be designated as a CAC. IBCCES provided a detailed curriculum and exceptional support to help us train hundreds of employees with the tools needed to accommodate anyone in the autistic community."

Training focuses on sensory awareness, environment, communication, motor and social skills, program development, emotional awareness, and a comprehensive autism competency exam. The autism training must be taken every two years to maintain the certification.

Like Peppa Pig theme park and Legoland Resort, helpful pre-visit planning resources are available on the park's website, including a sensory guide developed by IBCCES. The park also has two quiet rooms that have adjustable lighting, and a comfortable seating area for guests to take a break. Guests who want to enjoy the daily Sesame Street Party Parade without direct character interaction such as hugs and high fives are encouraged to stand closest to where the parade begins, designated as the "low sensory parade viewing" area.

Sesame Place's certification aligns with Sesame Workshop's commitment to increasing awareness and understanding of autism. Sesame Workshop launched the Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children initiative in 2015, which was developed to offer families ways to manage common challenges, to simplify everyday activities, and to grow connections with family, friends, and the community. The initiative includes a robust collection of online tools and resources featuring Julia, a four-year-old autistic Muppet, designed to help autistic children and their families.

"Through Julia and her family, we're able to model everyday moments and interactions from an autistic child's perspective and provide tools and strategies to families," said Ed Wells, executive vice president and head of global media and education. "We're proud that partners like Sesame Place share that vision and are committed to providing accessible and memorable experiences."

Alongside the CEC accreditation, Sesame Place aims to make as much of its park accessible to guests through its Ride Accessibility Program, which has been designed to allow guests to fully participate in the enjoyment of the park while keeping in mind the safety requirements of its rides and attractions. The program was developed based on the requirements of the manufacturers and by evaluating the physical and mental attributes required to safely ride each ride. Outside of the rides, the park provides general services, family services, accessible parking, mobility assistance, park accessibility, hearing and visual impairment assistance, and assistance for its guests with autism spectrum disorder.

Across the pond in the UK, **Alton Towers Resort** continues to drive forward its accessibility and inclusivity products, support, and training. The 2022 season has seen the introduction of several new features and developments to support guests before, during and after their visit to ensure a first-class experience for all, as Kate McBirnie, head of guest excellence, explained: "Further investment has been made to make additional radar keys, hearing loops and ear defenders available to help support guests during their visit, as well as hoists, shower chairs and deaf guards. Buggies, wheelchairs and mobility scooters are also available to hire, and a new, additional 'changing place toilet' has also



Julia is a four-year-old autistic Muppet, designed to help autistic children and their families at Sesame Place San Diego.

been created at the theme park entrance/exit, meaning the resort now has four dedicated 'changing place toilets'.

"Working with accessibility and inclusivity experts at AccessAble to identify short and long term opportunities for infrastructure changes, as well as ride manufacturers across the globe, the resort has undertaken an extensive review of rides and attractions to help provide enhancements to ride accessibility," continued McBirnie. "This has resulted in a full review of the resort's ride restrictions, allowing more choice for guests with additional needs. The investment of additional and new equipment that can be used in the event of an assisted exit, at an unusual stopping point for example, will now allow more people to experience more rides



Sesame Quiet Room

FEATURE



Double-width slide created for Alton Towers allows joint use opportunities for children with carers.

and attractions for the first time. The introduction of improved ramp access and brand-new access lifts at five of the theme park's iconic rides have also helped improve accessibility for guests of all ages.

"A new Quiet Room space has also been introduced at the resort's accommodation to support guests who need a dedicated space away from the hustle and bustle. Fitted with sensory and calming equipment, the new Quiet Space complements the existing space open for guests at the theme park, which has proved hugely successful since being introduced in 2020."

Thanks to the arrival of three brand-new attractions and live shows in CBeebies Land at Alton Towers, McBirnie explained that the team anticipates a significant increase in the number of families visiting the resort and following on from the success of Makaton training for employees in the CBeebies Land Hotel, earning the hotel Makaton Friendly status, additional Makaton training is now being rolled out to employees working across CBeebies Land, as well as new staff in the CBeebies Land Hotel.

"The new CBeebies Land attractions (Hey Duggee's Big Adventure Badge, JoJo and Gran Gran at Home and Andy's Adventure Dinosaur Dig) also consciously feature a number of accessible and inclusive features for



Alton Towers JoJo & Gran Gran At Home

families, including a double-width slide created for the theme park, which allows for joint use opportunities for children with carers and ground-level, sunken trampolines that are suitable for wheelchair users," said McBirnie. "Earlier in the year (March 2022), Alton Towers was also recognised for its extensive delivery and continued improvements, scooping Gold for the Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Award at the Enjoy Staffordshire Tourism & Good Food Awards 2022."

For 2022, Alton Towers has made 18 enhancements to aid ride accessibility and plans to enhance the accessibility of another four rides by the end of the year, as well as new equipment to help provide further assistance for guests. Outside of the rides, with a growing events calendar, the park's team knows that its live entertainment will play an integral part in the guest experience; as such, it is investing in digital screens at the main stage for British Sign Language and Makaton, as well as helping counteract height challenges by implementing dedicated viewing areas for the park's most popular events such as the Fireworks Spectacular.

"Alton Towers believes in first-class experiences for all," continued McBirnie. "The resort continues to move forwards in delivering an immersive and unforgettable escape for every disability need and requirement of our guest. We see this as pivotal to us being a truly inclusive provider of travel, leisure and entertainment."

And with that in mind, when it comes to staff knowledge and awareness, Alton Towers has developed a whole host of training, in association with inclusivity experts Open Inclusion, as well as internal bespoke employee training programmes that are specific to each department. "This allows for employees in all areas of the resort to access training, support and assets to help them identify and enhance accessibility and inclusivity in their areas," says McBirnie. "All our teams go through an induction process before starting in their roles, with follow up training and resources rolled out across the year. Often this training and development is compulsory, to help us attain a high level of service and awareness for each team member."

Blackpool Pleasure Beach (BPB) is a long-standing go-to attraction in the UK having been around for over 125 years! As such, it works hard to welcome all guests and has an ongoing relationship with Access for All UK, as well as taking advice from third party access specialists, on how the park can provide a safe and memorable visit for everyone.

With 35 rides and attractions in total, requirements for each differs as ride experiences at BPB can range from a gentle slow moving boat ride to a 235ft high rollercoaster and everything in between. The park's easy to understand pictorial Access Guide allows guests to make an informed choice about the rides they can participate in and what any limitations may be. The guide details 12 different riding requirements and a further five considerations (water, flash photography, strobe lights, transfer requirements and high thrill).

“Most rides operate with some kind of safety restriction – height requirements are the most familiar – but we find by providing guests with an easy to interpret, clear and realistic overview of the requirements of each ride, they are then able to make the best riding choices for themselves,” says Andy Hygate, BPB’s director of operations. “The access guide also details access points and / or issues such as stairs, the requirement to transfer to a ride vehicle and details what is involved in any situation when the ride cycle is interrupted.

“We’re currently operating in our 126th season and are famous for offering a mix of both classic rides (some over 100-years-old) and high-octane modern thrills like our double launched roller coaster, ICON, added in 2018 and then retrofitted this year with spinning seats for an ever more extreme experience. Due to this mix and long history, Blackpool Pleasure Beach has seen accessibility needs in the industry change massively. For our park, this has often required re-visiting existing attractions and coming up with new ways to change and improve access. The main piece of legislation that we take our lead from is the Equality Act of 2010.”

BPB also offers an Easypass system where guests who are unable to wait in queues because of a disability and / or medical reason, can use a card system that allows virtual waits and access by a dedicated alternative entrance. Additionally, it offers a free carer pass when required and has in-park dedicated adult changing facilities including accessible toilets, adult changing bed and a hoist.

“By making reasonable adjustments, such as dedicated entrances and offering the Easypass scheme we aim to offer everyone an inclusive and fun experience,” says Hygate.

For **Farah Experiences** in the UAE, which operates Yas Theme Parks; Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld and Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi, a key component to accessibility is providing guests and people of determination (the official term used in the UAE for special educational needs and disabilities) with the right information ahead of their visit. That’s why Farah Experiences has developed accessibility guides for each of the parks, that detail exact restrictions and accommodations made for people of determination. In each guide, guests can familiarise themselves with what rides and attractions are available to them, as well as the facilities they can use. The accessibility guides are easily downloadable at the theme parks’ websites. Moreover, Farah Experiences, “treats everyone the same. It is part of our daily duty to create more smiles and deliver a unique experience for guest of all ages.”

“The accessibility considerations for people of determination start at the very beginning of the guest journey,” says a Farah Experiences representative. “All the theme parks are equipped with accessible parking spaces that are clearly marked with the International Disability Symbol. Valet parking is also available to guests at a minimal cost, with valet parking attendants always on hand to assist guests. Furthermore, people of determination can enjoy a special discounted rate for themselves, plus one companion.



Grand National at Blackpool Pleasure Beach

“The teams at the parks are all trained and well experienced to assist people of determination over the course of their day at the park and the Guest Services team is also available to support people and their families to plan the best possible day across each theme park. This includes outlining to each guest which rides they can enjoy (this will differ based on the nature of disability) as well as where to find the nearest accessible facilities such as toilets and changing rooms.

“Guests with amputations and prosthesis may be restricted from some rides at Yas Waterworld, however most rides and attractions are accessible if the guest can maintain the required riding position and their prosthesis poses no safety concern to the rider.

“Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi is a stairs-free theme park to allow wheelchair access to all areas and then over at CLYMB Abu Dhabi, we accommodate people of determination at various levels for both indoor skydiving and wall climbing experiences. Guests with Down Syndrome are also welcome to enjoy our adventurous and safe experiences with the help and guidance of our certified instructors.”

Outside of the rides, all the theme parks are outfitted with accessibility ramps, seating, and facilities wherever possible. The operations teams across each theme park conduct regular audits to ensure that restaurants and dining outlets, shows and even general areas at the theme parks are as accessible to people of determination as possible. And in terms of staff training, Farah Experiences staff receive comprehensive training that includes sensitivity training and an in-depth guide to catering to people of determination. Farah Experiences does not rely on seasonal workers and only employs full-time staff who have undergone the necessary training to ensure that all guests are given the exemplary experience they deserve.

The Manufacturer's View

On the subject of inclusivity, ride manufacturer **ETF Rides** told **InterPark**, it "wants the widest possible audience to enjoy its rides, and that includes people with disabilities. In practice, we see that people with physical disabilities or – even more specifically – wheelchair-dependent persons – are not always able to experience a ride. We believe that this should and can be done differently.

"Decades ago, we made our first adapted vehicle: a people mover with a movable part of the armrest at one side of the decoration, so that guests with physical disabilities can get in and out of the ride vehicle more easily. Thanks to constant innovation, we now have wheelchair vehicles available that meet the highest safety standards for all our people movers. They are ingenious redesigns of our existing people movers that allow a wheelchair to be driven onto them and have room for an attendant. In developing these, our main goal has been to focus on the experience and not the physical disability. We want to make wheelchair users forget their disability and give them the same experience as other guests. All functionalities, such as game elements and audio-visual options in a ride can therefore be experienced in the wheelchair vehicle in the same way as in any other vehicle.

"For a park it is also important that making a ride accessible for guests with wheelchairs does not or, only minimally, affects the programming or ride capacity. Through our smart programming, we make this possible with our trackless ride vehicles. The longer time needed for embarking and disembarking isn't a problem; the special extra vehicle has a separate station spot, and we switch ride vehicles seamlessly, so no ride capacity is lost."

A selection of ETF rides with facilities for people with physical disabilities include: Symbolica at Efteling in the Netherlands; L'Expérience in France; Lego Factory Adventure Ride at Legoland NY, USA; and Swiss Chocolate Adventure in Switzerland. Parks are confronted with new or stricter legislation and are obliged to make provisions for disabled users. These are then put on the shoulders of the suppliers of the rides.



Symbolica 'Koningszaal'

"We have a leading role in this," says Ruud Koppens, President of ETF. "We want to create an experience in which a vehicle has a prominent role for every guest, including those with a disability. Changes in laws and regulations force us to constantly innovate and stay focused."



Zamperla - Happy Swing at Luna Farm

Italian ride manufacturer **Zamperla**, which was involved in the new Peppa Pig theme park, had this to say on the topic of inclusivity in theme parks and attractions: "One of the most talked-about topics currently, is for sure, inclusivity, but what does this mean exactly? And what are the primary considerations needed to be inclusive?

"Inclusivity stands for, 'The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as those having physical or mental disabilities or belonging to other minority groups.

Amusement parks, which are businesses open to the public sector, must take into consideration that people with mental or physical disabilities are often limited from experiencing a lot of major life activities, such as visiting theme parks.

"So how has Zamperla promoted and created an appealing place for children and their families, with the aim to embrace diversity and treat people fairly and equally? Promoting Italian excellence, in December 2019, Zamperla inaugurated Luna Farm, in FICO Eatery World, the largest food park in the world. This modern theme park brings families and children into an immersive journey with the opportunity to experience 15 themed attractions. It aims to be an ultra-accessible and inclusive park as its attractions are designed to be dedicated to people with special needs. The Magic Bike and the Happy Swing are two examples of rides that have been installed in the park that are ADA certificated and accessible for everyone.

"Another great example of inclusivity in amusement parks is Neopolis in Kiev, Ukraine, which opened in December last year and is not just a park full of rides, but also a digital and interactive city. The ADA-certificated Magic Bike situated in Neopolis has been provided by Zamperla so that people with special needs can access the park.

"Over the past few years, we have made a very deliberate decision to build rides and contribute to the creation of amusement parks all around the world that are accessible to everyone. Sustainability, equality, and inclusion are the three main leitmotifs in our business; therefore, our purpose is to create lasting memories of amusements that everyone can experience."

Triotech's mission is to be the most innovative creator of integrated immersive and interactive experiences and its DNA rests on one simple philosophy: never compromise on guest experience. This applies to all the guests riding its attractions, including disabled visitors.

For example, one of its latest installations is at La Cité de la Voile Eric Tabarly in the French city of Lorient. This is a dynamic attraction that offers an immersive experience to visitors, where the guests discover the sensation of a sailing race in the middle of the ocean. They stand on pneumatic platforms that move to simulate waves while being immersed through media content projected in front of them on a giant screen, with special effects that complete the immersion. In addition to the standing platforms, two places for wheelchairs were created. Guests with reduced mobility can therefore participate in the experience and enjoy the thrilling special effects such as scents, blast, water, and fresh wind, while motion on their emplacements were removed for security reasons.



Triotech

UK-based resort transport manufacturer **Severn Lamb** takes accessibility and visitor comfort very seriously, ensuring that its entire product range is accessible to all users. One project/product development that posed some unique challenges was the four, battery electric, double decker trams, commissioned for a client in Madinaty, Egypt. The trams, destined for a retail mall and outdoor shopping centre had to be accessible to everyone regardless of age or mobility.

"The trams by nature have a raised seating area, accessible by a running board/step for most of the passengers, this conventional style of access is accompanied by handrails both as you get onto the vehicle and as you ascend to the top deck," Severn Lamb's Matthew French told *InterPark*. "The client chose to not extend this accessibility to the upper level, but we did need to overcome the initial entrance for these passengers.

"The simplest solution would be to provide the client with removable accessibility ramps that can be stored when not in use. Not only is this quite cumbersome and labour intensive, to meet regulations, the ramps would have to be abnormally long, to not exceed the maximum ramp angle when boarding a passenger.

"Our solution was to intergrade an electronic loading ramp that can be extended, raised, and lowered as and when required. This ensured the trams could be boarded at any point along the track as this method only extended a short distance from the side of the vehicle. It also allowed wheelchair users to independently access our trams and not have to rely on assistance to navigate a ramp entrance.

"Solving both problems, we even managed to ensure that the heritage look was maintained, obscuring most of the mechanism behind our side panelling when not in use. This is just one of many instances where we have incorporated accessibility into one of our products and with every project, we strive to find more innovative and user-friendly ways to integrate this criteria into our designs."



Severn Lamb's Red Tram Accessibility features

Polin believes that even the smallest changes can make the biggest difference to quality of life with the integration of technology, interactivity, and gaming. Technology offers many ways to help people with all capabilities lead healthy lives, and with more than one billion people living with disabilities, it's vital that technology reflects the diversity of the users to foster digital inclusion for all.

Focusing on empowering people with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality, Polin recently introduced its innovative Splash Bucket AllCan, with the first being installed at Tuzla Marina Waterpark in İstanbul, Turkey in July 2019.

FEATURE



Polin Marina Aquapark Waterland, Istanbul, Turkey

Splash Bucket AllCan is a one-on-one interactive splash game to see who has the fastest reactions. Players must tap the lit buttons as soon as lights appear. Each player aims to beat their competitor in order to splash them during the game with nozzles embedded on the modules. Then, at the end of the game the loser gets an even bigger water splash.

Splash Bucket AllCan offers an inclusive, interactive design to empower people with disabilities to lead healthy, active lifestyles. Its universal design provides sensory processing and creates a space that embraces all members of the community. The innovative product has been honoured with several awards and has been chosen as this year's recipient of the International Design Awards; Good Design Awards, and 'A' Design Awards, which are the oldest and world's most recognised programs for design excellence. It has also been chosen as the Best Innovative Product' at the Attraction Star Awards.

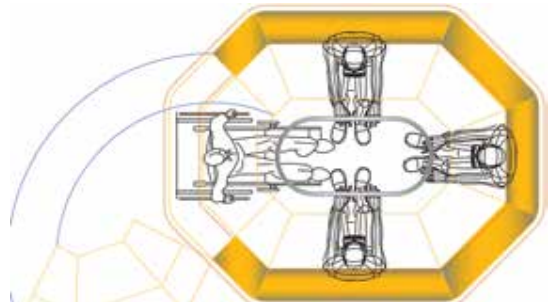
Over at **BoldMove Nation** - the company behind the recently launched WaterSlider VR and the double-action Smash & Reload dark ride family - the team believes that if you consider accessibility in a broader sense, which is what it is aiming to do, technology should be more accessible to everyone – virtual and augmented reality, as well as media-based interactive rides for families of all ages.

With Smash & Reload recently selected for installation at French theme park Le PAL, BoldMove Nation's Anja D'Hondt commented: "Not everyone dares to ride a roller coaster or can understand VR and complex gaming. Our interactive Smash & Reload dark ride is developed so all ages can enjoy the gameplay, thus making interactive media gaming accessible to entire families. It is also easily accessible for all ages, with vehicles opening at both sides for smooth entry and exit. Furthermore, on the IP side we have taken this into account and made the story fun yet appealing and understandable for everyone."

Currently being installed in a water park in Doha, Qatar, and as featured in our technology focus in the Mar/Apr issue, WaterSlider VR is BoldMove's new motion and media-based attraction that combines physical thrills

with virtual reality. Suitable for indoor and outdoor use and compliant with all safety requirements, the WaterSlider VR is based on a life raft that can seat up to four people and one wheelchair, accessible via the backside.

"WaterSlider VR is accessible to young and old as it just requires people to take a seat, put on the goggles and enjoy," continues D'Hondt. "It's a thrilling water roller coaster experience into the depths of the ocean that is fun with funky music. It entirely fulfills our mission to create happier worlds and bring people together!"



Access Water Slider

While accessibility on rides and attractions is important, the services available at theme parks and attractions also need to take into consideration the needs of all guests. As such, revenue management systems supplier, **Sacoa** offers self-service kiosks software with ADA capabilities, allowing customers to view and buy special offers, check balances, purchase cards and credits and use them for any attraction or activity.

For several years now, the company has considered people who have issues accessing a regular screen and as such, its kiosk software has been adapted. The kiosk now contains an ADA Access button on the main screen, which enables it to become accessible to all people with disabilities. By pressing it, all the buttons of the interface are placed at the bottom of the screen so that, for example, a person in a wheelchair can operate it in an agile, practical, and simple way.





Dotto Trains' Muson River electric vehicles for Expo 2020.



Dotto Trains has always been committed to sustainability, not only investing in R&D of green mobility solutions but also engaging in all three sustainability spheres: environmental, social, and economic. Dotto Trains aligns itself with the 2030 ONU's Agenda guidelines to create a better way of life and is constantly committed to reducing its environmental impact by raising customers' awareness of eco-sustainable means, while identifying and working with suppliers that have the same respect for the environment. A focus on sustainability also means ensuring its trains are accessible to everybody, providing different solutions for people with reduced mobility.

A recent example of this, was the supply of three Muson River electric vehicles with PRM access (persons with reduced mobility) for the Expo 2020 held in Dubai, UAE. Acting as the official Expo Explorers, each Muson River electric models supplied, were completely personalised for the customer needs and were a way of transporting people around the Expo, while remaining respectful of the environment. For this partnership, PRM

access was gained by manually adding a ramp at the side of the vehicle, ensuring that maximum capacity was maintained. When necessary, two of the vehicle's seats could be lifted to make space for a wheelchair.

Where required, Dotto Trains can also provide PRM access via a rear platform entrance with pneumatic lift and retractable folding and sliding seats, as well as wheelchair-equipped areas with wall or floor restraint systems, grab bars, call buttons and steps for an easy ascent.

Fabbri Group has introduced several new rides to the market in the past couple of years, one of which is a 34-metre Ferris Wheel, which can be accessed by wheelchair users. The portable model, which sits on a steel base of 20 x 10-metres, has been installed in Toulon, France and features 24 semi-closed telescopic cabins that are equipped with stainless steel finishings and feature illumination on the ceiling of the cabins. Passengers are protected well from weather conditions but still have a ventilated cabin, offering contact with the open air. The latest in lighting technology has been used for the spokes and wheel circumference, as well as a high-resolution LED screen for the ride centre.



Ferris Wheel in Toulon, France

PROJECT PROFILE:



Iron Gwazi | Busch Gardens, Tampa Bay

By David Whitworth

Iron Gwazi is a steel hybrid coaster that has led a very interesting past. The new star attraction of Busch Gardens at Tampa Bay in the US has been completely revamped from its predecessor, Gwazi, a traditional wooden roller coaster, which first opened at the park on 18 June, 1999. Gwazi was originally a wooden dual roller coaster with two tracks named Lion and Tiger. The park named the tracks based on a fabled creature, which forms the shape of the head of a tiger and the body of a lion. These wildcats were the Asian tiger and the African lion. The ride itself had a track length of 2,100-metres (7,000ft) when measured together. It was an impressive feat of structuring within a web of wood. A popular ride, Gwazi gradually showed its wear and tear, and eventually closed to the public at the end of the 2015 season. Four years later, plans

were made by Busch Gardens for a cosmetic change to reboot Gwazi for modern day riding.

A major part of Gwazi's structure has been recycled, with the track being upgraded to steel and the remodelled wooden frame remaining in place. The entirety of the lift hill is built from steel. It has a hollow element making for a sizable gap with just two main beams holding the structure in place. The track itself has been recoloured with a vivid pink tone while the carriages are a two-tone green with crocodile features. If before the theming to Gwazi was to a lion and a tiger, the re-imagined Iron Gwazi is themed with this new crocodile element - in keeping with Busch Gardens naming a selection of its rides after animals. As well as the ride carriages, the green theme continues into the queuing area, where guests will be educated by the history of the crocodile through various interactive features.

The education in question is born from a partnership between the Wilderness Foundation Africa (WFA) and the African themed Iron Gwazi. The WFA, with over 45 years of service, hails from South Africa and serves to protect wildlife and wilderness through education programmes. This fruitful alliance will help raise awareness of the vital work in protecting animals and habitats on the continent. And the agreement will bring financial benefits too, as a portion of the sales from Iron Gwazi merchandise will be donated to the WFA to aid its conservation programme as well as contribute to research development. At the ride's





opening ceremony, dignitaries from the WFA were present to cut the celebratory ribbon and open the ride.

"Our park experiences are unique because guests can ride some of the most thrilling rides in the world while also seeing and learning more about animals that they may never otherwise have a chance to see up close," said Neal Thurman, President of Busch Gardens Tampa.

"We are proud that a portion of each ticket, each visit and each experience at our parks helps fund the conservation of animals and their habitats. In keeping with that commitment, our partnership with WFA is another important way we are helping raise awareness and support of the



important work that this organisation does every day to protect animals and their habitats."

Iron Gwazi is a mammoth structure and is also a record-breaker. It is billed as the tallest hybrid roller coaster in North America. The attraction is also the steepest and fastest of its kind on the planet with a maximum vertical height of 91°. According to Busch Gardens, "Riders on Iron Gwazi will experience a dozen airtime moments, including three inversions, as they sink their teeth into crocodile-inspired thrills. The ride will feature all-new thrill elements, as well as restored elements of Gwazi."

The ride packs a punch with its main drop standing at 63-metres (206ft). The length of the roller coaster is 1,242-metres (4,075ft), reaching a maximum speed of 76mph (122 km/h). The thrill ride will last one-minute 50 seconds in total and seats 24 passengers per train, with two trains alternating journeys, with each having six carriages. They seat two abreast in two rows with lap bars as its security mechanism.

Busch Gardens gave flight to its tenth roller coaster last March in readiness for the new season and it dominates the Tampa Bay skyline. The manufacturer tasked with this attraction was US-based Rocky Mountain Construction. Work to build Iron Gwazi commenced in August 2019 with track work finishing on March 8, 2020. With the roller coaster on the cusp of opening and going through its final testing stage, the worldwide pandemic caused the attraction to delay its opening several times. That was until this Spring on 11 March, when the crocodile was finally let loose into the wild. To celebrate its launch, the park held various events, including having actors dressed in themed costumes to entertain guests around the ride's entrance. There was also a concert held by celebrated singer Sean Paul.

Iron Gwazi is a wonderfully weaving wooden coaster haring through itself. Its steep start is an eye-catching feature gearing riders up for a

PROJECT PROFILE:



pulsating ride. The park has impressively managed to convert a dual roller coaster into a standalone hybrid as is the work undertaken to reorganise the area on such a vast scale. The footings of the original ride can be seen as riders race on-board Iron Gwazi as a nod to its history. And as the ride has been upgraded for modern day use, it has also been technologically advanced to be lit up at night with a variety of colours adorning the coaster, giving a fresh sensory experience when riding in darkness. The ride is located in the themed area of Morocco – creating a suitable Arabian



flavour for its new premier attraction. Busch Gardens will be boosted by the new attraction to continue welcoming, on average, over four million visitors each year.

“Iron Gwazi has been highly anticipated by roller coaster enthusiasts around the world since we first announced this new legend. Due to the unprecedented challenges over the last two years, Iron Gwazi was delayed, and we recognise the delay has disappointed our fans. We appreciate the patience our guests have shown,” said Thurman. “We are finally able to open this incredible ride and deliver on the next-level thrills that our roller coaster fans crave and expect from Busch Gardens.”

Iron Gwazi is a monster roller coaster that provides lots of bite. Fittingly, the ride will leave guests hungry for more trips aboard this crocodile themed adventure.

Jacob Kilcup, of Rocky Mountain Construction, discussed with *InterPark* the company’s role in creating Iron Gwazi.

***InterPark:* How did Busch Gardens go about converting a dual roller coaster to a hybrid one and tell us what challenges you faced?**

Jacob Kilcup: “Converting a dual coaster to a single-track layout had several challenges. Rather than just following the original ride path, Iron Gwazi often ‘jumps’ from section to section of the original coaster. Because we design and reference the original bent numbering system, there was a fair bit of confusion during construction. Foundation names, bent modifications, and the direction of travel were some items that needed extra clarification. There were also numerous structural

implications of jumping between different foundations and the wood quality of the existing coaster was not uniform. This being said, having such an enormous structure to work with allowed us much more creativity with the actual layout itself. Ultimately all of this contributed to creating Iron Gwazi what it is today, and we are really proud of that!"

IP: How did Rocky Mountain Construction get involved in the project?

JK: "We had actually been flirting with Busch Gardens and SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment for several years before getting the final green light. They create some amazing guest experiences and we felt it was only a matter of time until we worked together. Things lined up, we collaborated, and the result is incredible. They are a great team to work with and are very particular about the feel of their rides. It came together quite nicely."

IP: What were the challenges of building during the pandemic?

JK: "We actually didn't have to deal with the pandemic issues too much. Most of the ride was completely constructed before things began to shut

down. On our end, we were installing some final braces and had begun commissioning the ride. The pandemic mostly just impacted the opening date. It seems the anticipation was worth it and we really hope everyone is enjoying Iron Gwazi as much as we do. All's well that ends well!"

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Efteling Celebrates 70 Years

By Emma Davidson



Located in the South of Holland, enchanting, fairytale theme park, Efteling is packed with fairytale attractions, captivating shows and exciting rides that take inspiration from childhood tales written by famous authors, including Hans Christian Andersen, the Brothers Grimm, and Charles Perrault.

Efteling first opened its doors back in 1952 and with a long and colourful history, is now the largest theme park in the Netherlands, as well as the third-largest theme park in Europe.

2022 is a year of celebration for the park and all its guests, in recognition of its dedicated loyal visitors and fans and the legacy of the park itself, as it celebrates its 70th anniversary.

For 70 years, Efteling has been a special world of wonder where visitors are immersed in fairytales, stories and legends. For 2022 only, as part of its jubilee anniversary celebrations, Efteling has added a very special temporary fairytale to its list of story-themed attractions, which is inspired by the British children's novel *Alice in Wonderland* (written by Lewis Carroll in 1866).

The official opening of the temporary fairytale was performed by the well-known Dutch TV cook, Hugo Kennis assisted by the Mad Hatter. With the cutting of the pink ribbon, Efteling Wonderland was open. The interactive pop-up will run until 3 October 2022 and visitors are invited



to play an active role in the mad birthday tea party, hosted by the Mad Hatter and March Hare. This once in a lifetime party takes place all day long on the Speelweide playing field in the heart of the theme park.

Fons Jurgens, Efteling's CEO, explained: "Efteling is celebrating its 70th anniversary in turbulent times, so the importance of being together and escaping reality occasionally is more important than ever.

"We have consciously chosen to create a temporary, but innovative fairytale that is about celebration. Here, our visitors will be the guests of honour and play an active part in the fairytale with the help of the Mad Hatter and March Hare. Efteling will always remain true to the fairytales but is also looking for different and unique ways to innovate throughout the years, ensuring to celebrate another 70 years to the best of our ability."

During the Alice and Wonderland experience, visitors go down a rabbit hole into the March Hare's vegetable garden, where there are activities throughout the day and cheerful music is always playing. The Mad Hatter and the March Hare invite their guests of honour to the mad tea party table, laid with teacups, cakes and party hats.

Those who pay attention will see that seven chairs are reserved for Efteling's residents. The hosts and their guests enjoy rhyming, singing, and dancing, while around the party table and in a number of wondrous scenes reminiscent of the famous British children's book, guests can take funny pictures, as well as join and leave at any time.

There is also a souvenir stand and a welcoming area with snacks and drinks in the vegetable garden. In addition, garlands are hung, and party music is played throughout the park, as every day at 4pm the park guests are invited to join in with the anniversary celebrations.



PARKLIFE



The park has grown exponentially in its 70 years, now boasting 36 attractions, including six roller coasters and four water rides such as Piraña, Flying Dutchman, De Vliegende Hollander and Gondoletta, which are suitable for both children and adults.

Some of the park's most popular rides include the Symbolica: Palace of Fantasy, an enchanting palace with unexpected twists and turns. Guests can enjoy the experience with the King and Magic Jester Pardoes, who ensure that every visit is surprising and engaging. The ride leads guests along secret corridors, through to magical themed rooms. The tackles ride for Symbolica was manufactured by ETF Ride Systems.

Baron 1898, a Bolliger & Mabillard ride, is another favoured attraction. It's a dive roller coaster that enters a mine, plunging guests into a 37.5-metre mineshaft at a speed of 90 km/h, and the Max & Moritza is a family favourite, too. This dual tracked and powered roller coaster, designed in close cooperation with Mack Rides, is fun for all the family. Guests escape in the self-built soapbox style carts with the rascals Max and Moritz, who are locked up in their mother's cuckoo workshop.

Python and Vogel Rok, both manufactured by Vekoma, have also proved popular with guests. Python is a steel roller coaster with four

inversions: double loop and corkscrew at great heights and Vogel Rok is a high-speed roller coaster in the dark. This is a fast and strong ride that passes serpents and birds, led by 'Sindbad' the sailor. This character also leads the brand-new Archipel and Sirocco rides that only opened this year.

Sirocco offers a dizzying boat ride in spinning merchant boats for all ages in the newly themed Sindbad the Sailor area of the park and Archipel serves as an exciting island of adventure for children to explore.

Throughout the year, Efteling hosts a variety of shows for guests to enjoy alongside its rides and attractions. First off, Park Show Raveleijn sees Countess 'Halina' teach five young guests how to protect the magical city of Raveleijn while they combine their strengths to battle the five-headed Draconicon. Also part of the park's programme is Aquanura, the largest water show in Europe, with more than 200 fountains and 900 lights and a water fountain show that plays up to four times a day.

The Fairytale Collector is another production that sees a collection of Dutch spoken fairy tales performed for families to enjoy, and the Open-Air Theatre sees the Fairytale Forest inhabitant put on an immersive performance as guests relax on the surrounding benches.

Its cultural, romantic, and nostalgic themes, as well as its big variety of thrilling and enchanting attractions, makes Efteling an ideal short-break destination. Efteling boasts two hotels and two holiday villages alongside its main park. At less than five-minute's-walk away from the theme park, guests will find the Efteling Hotel, which houses 20 enchanting themed suites, such as The Sleeping Beauty Suite, or guests can stay in one of the comfort rooms or more spacious Junior Suites.

On the edge of the nature district, Loonsche Land and within walking distance from Efteling theme park lies Holiday village Efteling Loonsche Land. The holiday village offers a hotel and cosy homes hidden in the greenery and the Loonsche Land Hotel offers comfortable and beautiful views in its 75 rooms. Here, guests can look out over the treetops and houses that are covered with dune sand and heather. If guests want to combine a hotel room stay with the privacy of a holiday home, the holiday village offers detached themed hotel rooms with hotel service.





Holiday village Efteling Loonsche Land offers simple, cosy holiday houses and hotel rooms made from natural materials.

In addition, visitors can also stay at Holiday Village Efteling Bosrijk, which consists of luxurious self-catering houses. In Holiday Village Efteling Bosrijk guests can relax in the atmospheric holiday homes, family rooms and group accommodation. All the accommodation includes unlimited access to the Efteling theme park.

In 2024, Efteling will be expanding with a new hotel inside the amusement park gates, and a completely renewed thematic area with an indoor attraction. The new hotel will be the largest hotel in the World of Efteling, with 143 rooms, seven floors, two restaurants and a spa. A particularly unique attribute is that visitors will be able to stay overnight inside the theme park for the very first time.

The theme park covers 72 hectares, and yet at most, just 11% of the park is built on — the rest has forests, meadows, squares, and water features, making it incredibly sustainable. Efteling is unique in that it is open 365 days of the year, and, in wintertime, the park transforms into Winter Efteling.

During this time, the Dutch theme park resort transports guests to a winter wonderland, decorated with festive garlands, bonfires, crackling wood burning stoves and thousands of twinkling lights. All the rides and the Efteling inhabitants also prepare for winter in their own special and unique way.

During Winter Efteling, visitors can enjoy winter snacks and hot drinks in various places located around the park. In addition, heart-warming musical acts entertain guests that gather around the bonfires during Winter Efteling, while performances take place in the open-air theatre in the Fairytale Forest.

Efteling is known for having an array of tasty food and drink options throughout the park, too. Starting off, guests can enjoy a three-course Burgundian heroes' dinner for the whole family at the Het Wapen van Raveleijn restaurant – a three-hour interactive journey where guests are taken through the city of Raveleijn, ending with a meal for heroes.

In addition, there's the Bäckerei Krümel a traditional bakery, 't Verwende Nest that sells sweet treats including the infamous Chimney Cake and takeaway restaurant, Frau Boltes Küche offers French fries and chicken snacks. Visitors can grab international cuisine such as burgers and plant-based snacks from the Fabula restaurant.

No Dutch theme park would be complete without pancakes and guests will find these, alongside hot drinks at Polles Keuken. Dutch speciality mini pancakes can be tasted in 't Poffertje restaurant. If visitors are looking for a more sophisticated sit-down meal to share with family, Panorama restaurant serves a variety of dishes and Pinokkio's Pizza & Pasta restaurant serves fresh Italian food daily.

In addition to this, Toko Pagode is an onsite Asian food restaurant with an amazing choice of noodles, fried rice, and other popular Asian delicacies and Efteling also houses a number of self-service restaurants and takeaways such as Het Witte Paard, De Kleyne Klaroen and 't Melkhuysie where guests can grab sandwiches, hot and cold drinks, salads, cake, churros and milkshakes.

As the theme park celebrates 70 years this year, it's important to highlight that Efteling is a theme park for everyone. It aims to provide families with the best memories that can be passed on and followed by the next generation.

Efteling continues to maintain the park's legacy by offering new experiences, be that in attractions, accommodation or food and drink form, while also contributing to current and future guest happiness and satisfaction. Efteling also wants to continue to follow practices in regard to sustainability.

Fons Jurgens concluded: "In 2021, nature at Efteling was still scored highly in guest appreciation surveys, highlighting the importance of sustainability to our visitors, too. Efteling is a nature park, and it wishes to remain so. For that, sustainable initiatives are needed and by continuing with sustainable practices and the upkeep of our green spaces, Efteling will be preserved for the generations of the future."



Looking Up

By Dennis Spiegel



As we start the 2022 season, it appears we are seeing strong improvement in guest interest in visiting parks this season. From Dubai to Germany, to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, ticket sales are up significantly from the pre-Covid 2019 numbers, with some early park operators announcing attendance up 75% thus far.



Source Miranda Campbell

Across the US, while still early in the season, when weather is good, people are knocking down gates to get back to the parks. This is a great indicator of potential season opportunities. As an example, Silverwood theme park in Idaho is indicating that ticket sales are up 63% from 2019 pre-Covid numbers. The park said 75% of its visitors are from out of its core market, a real bell weather indicator. What does this say about the 2022 season? People want to get out and experience leisure recreation and have plain old fun, Silverwood's marketing department indicated. People are tired of the boundaries, restrictions, and limitations.

Disney, Universal, and Cedar Fair are showing strong signs of early attendance and per capita spending, except in China where Disney Shanghai, Disney Hong Kong and Universal Beijing are (at the time of print) currently closed due to Covid-19. There is no current information regarding how long these parks may be closed and at the time of the writing of this article, it is very early in the season so we should have disposition soon.

Gas prices here in the US have reached an all-time high, with oil

prices approaching similar pricing to what Europe has experienced for quite a few years. However, at this point in the early season, people are still traveling by automobile and air travel is packed. Hotel bookings are strong in the vacation destination locations, such as Orlando and Southern California and other destination locations like Myrtle Beach, Gatlinburg, and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee are all seeing huge increases from 2019. Again, a good sign and early positive indicators.

Talking to operators in the Middle East, Europe, and South America, I am hearing the same message, business is up, and people are coming back in droves.

It is truly amazing when you stop and think how strong and resilient our industry remains during crisis periods. We are currently experiencing the largest increase in inflation that we have seen in decades and oil prices have hit an all-time high in the USA. The global stock markets have more ups and downs than any of our industry's roller coasters and labour remains tight for operators. The war in Ukraine continues pounding the globe on a daily basis, appearing to be more devastating to financial



Source Universal Studios

markets every day; the uncertainty of the war permeates the entire global community. No one knows what Putin has in mind and what his next move may bring.

So, how do we as an industry fair because of these impending, impacting issues? Well, we continue to do what we do best — provide well-received forms of escapism that allow people to remove, forget, and have enjoyment for short blasts of time, some get away relaxation.

When I entered the amusement park industry, my first boss was a very intuitive person. He told me, "During times of wars, depressions, and recessions, people always have money set aside for three things. #1 Alcohol, they may buy a cheaper wine or liquor, but they want to have a drink. #2 Cosmetics, people always save money for their personal needs. #3 Escapism, people want to get away from the everyday problems, so they save a few dollars to go out and recreate and escape". This has been true for decades. That is why we see such strong outpouring for our leisure attractions.

No one does it better than our industry when it comes to the serving up of fun and getaway moments. Here in the US, more people visit theme and water parks than all professional

sports attendance counted together (NBA, MLB, Hockey, and the NFL). Keep in mind that, in 2019, we served over 375 million people at our attractions and globally, over 600 million people were entertained. We remain the preferred leisure activity by people all over the world.

So again, I ask... What do we do to keep guests coming back? Simply, we continue to offer wholesome family entertainment that provides laughs, smiles, and makes memories that our visitors can keep and cherish. That's what keeps them coming back over and over, and always will.

Things are looking up!



About ITPS

Dennis Spiegel, past Chairman of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), is Founder & CEO of International Theme Park Services, Inc. (ITPS), where "FUN IS A SERIOUS BUSINESS." ITPS is globally the leisure industry's leading independent, full-service consulting firm. Located in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, ITPS is uniquely qualified to assist in all aspects of entertainment project development, and has worked on over 500 projects in over 50 countries since its inception in 1983. The corporate website is <http://www.interthemepark.com> and the staff can be reached by email at itps@interthemepark.com



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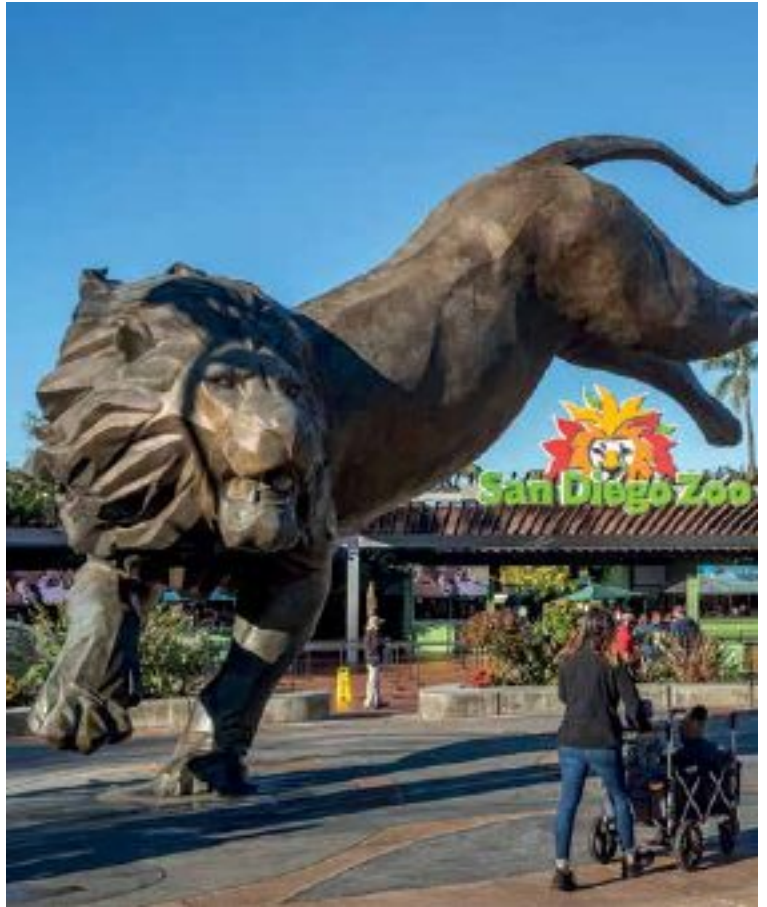
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Erika Kohler

Erika Kohler, San Diego Zoo's Executive Director

Following the recent announcement that Erika Kohler has been appointed San Diego Zoo's Executive Director, *InterPark's* Editor, Beth Whitaker sat down with her to discuss how she plans to move the zoo forward and what it means to be only the second woman in the zoo's 106-year-history, to hold the position.

Beth Whitaker: When did you first start working in the parks and attractions industry?

Erika Kohler: I began my career as an events manager working at the Lincoln Park Zoo located in Chicago, Illinois. As the events manager, I produced special events to help raise funds for the zoo. It had always been a dream of mine to work in a role within a zoo profession, as my focus was aimed towards working somewhere where I could help make a difference daily. This position was the perfect introduction to the zoo world... from the people, the operations, and the wildlife care, it exceeded my expectations.

BW: What have been some of your career highlights?

EK: There have been many career highlights in the 25 years I have held various positions within the Zoo Operations sector. One that comes to mind, most recently, is taking on an implemental role in the opening of The Denny Sanford Wildlife Explorers Basecamp at the San Diego Zoo. Wildlife Explorers Basecamp covers approximately 3.2 acres, which includes the new McKinney Family Spineless Marvels Invertebrate House and Jake's Cool Critters herptile house, along with the Kenneth C. Griffin Komodo Kingdom and William E. Cole Family Hummingbird Habitat that opened in 2021. The area is designed to foster empathy for nature and to appeal to all age groups, especially families. The area includes the following attributes: Four different habitat zones, eight buildings, oversized species-themed sculptures, and a



floating, seven-foot-high stone globe, which rotates on a thin layer of water.

Wildlife Explorers Basecamp by far has been my favourite project I have been fortunate enough to manage and support. Basecamp was a complex project with many moving parts. Among all those moving parts, we also had to deal with major construction as part of working through a pandemic that hit in 2020. Everyone pulled together to make it happen, even when thrown a pandemic curveball. In the end, to see the drawings and plans we spoke about early on come to life was a proud moment. The cherry on top, after the grand opening in March 2022 - the guests' reactions, they were certainly overwhelming. To see their faces, they were so happy and thankful for this new habitat we had created for them, and their families. To see how this resonated with them and connected the guests to our mission, and to see their gratitude was priceless and will forever be embedded in my heart.

Although Basecamp was a significant highlight in my career, one other career highlight that stands out was producing Jammin' as part of the Zoo concert series at the Lincoln Park Zoo. Talent for the series included: Blondie, 10,000 Maniacs, Buckwheat Zydeco, among many others. This series was an incredible way to introduce new audiences to the zoo and raise funds for conservation.

BW: And what about outside of the zoo, how do you further support the sector?

EK: Since 2011, I have been fortunate enough to be an active member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), where I serve as a professional fellow and member of the Business Operations Committee.

BW: What have been some of the most significant changes within the attractions industry that you have seen?

EK: A definite shift in providing more experiences to the guest. Guests are looking for unique, special experiences they can do together and share with others. We have to remember that if the guest is happy, if





provided a unique and memorable experience, they will come back for more (and hopefully bring a friend or two.) One additional significant change I have seen is the elevation in food and beverage offerings. We always want to strive in making the food and beverage scene a world class experience for all. Similar to unique experiences, world class cuisine will keep guests coming back for more. Another significant change I have noticed is how technology is playing a larger role in amenities, how guests order tickets, how guests reserve special experiences, how technology is used in food and beverage applications. If we make it easy for the guest, they will come back for more.

Within the zoo environment specifically, guest perspectives have shifted significantly. A clean, safe facility was always (and will always be) important to the guest, but guests want options and experiences - an



increased level of service. They want opportunities to teach their children from their experiences. They want to leave after a long day of fun knowing they were provided a world class experience all while learning and teaching those they love.

BW: What do you love most about working within the attractions and zoos sector?

EK: Easy. I love the people. The zoo and aquarium profession has some of the most talented, smart and dedicated people who are changing the world each and every day. We collaborate with each other to help wildlife and save species. This is the most gratifying job with the most incredible people!

BW: The attractions industry has traditionally been dominated by men in leadership positions, do you feel this is now changing?

EK: I am so incredibly proud to have been provided the opportunity to take over as the Executive Director of the San Diego Zoo, having become the second woman to helm this 106-year-old institution. My accomplishments would not have been possible without the help and mentorship of so many. Many women in my life have supported me, zoo directors and others outside the field have encouraged me (and other women as well) to join the leadership ranks. It is going to take all of us to be successful, so it is important to include everyone in this journey. It is an exciting time in the zoo and aquarium profession as we begin to witness the evolution of more diverse leadership. At the end of the day though, more voices makes us stronger, and encouragement is key to those successes.

BW: Tell me more about your role at San Diego Zoo, how are you hoping to take the park forward?

EK: I am looking forward to expanding our education opportunities. We have incredible conservation work going on right here in San Diego, and it is imperative we find ways to engage school children and the community in this critical work. These children are the future, and the future is vital in this conservation work. Of course, I would like to continue to further our conservation work around the world as well. A big effort indeed, but we have had so many successes and we are poised to do even more with the incredible teams in place here who are talented, smart, and dedicated. We will do amazing things together. Lastly, master planning is a must as we move the Zoo forward... looking to the future, 10, 20, 50 years. What stories do we tell and how do we engage our audiences? How can we contribute more to conservation work? I get excited just thinking about it!

BW: What makes San Diego Zoo unique?

EK: We are a non-profit wildlife sanctuary home to more than 3,500 rare and endangered animals representing more than 650 species and subspecies. We also have a prominent botanical collection with more than 750,000 exotic plants. We are located just north of downtown San Diego in Balboa Park. Who knew, when in San Diego, you could step on grounds and travel to Africa, Australia, and the Arctic all in one day! A unique experience for certain.

Another reason we pride ourselves in being unique has to do with our amazing team members and volunteers. They provide outstanding service to our guests on a daily basis and we could not be successful without our team.

We also provide special services such as an ADA shuttle, American Sign Language, and certified deaf interpreter guides, so we can welcome all guests to the San Diego Zoo. In partnership with Kulture City, a training program was developed to help team members and volunteers



recognise and interact with guests who may be on the spectrum. Over 2,000 of our team members and volunteers have gone through the training. We also have sensory bags that are available to be checked-out by guests for free. Our goal is to ensure everyone feels welcome when they step on zoo grounds.

BW: How do you intend to apply your previous experience to your new role?

EK: I will continue to highlight that the San Diego Zoo - as a part of San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance - is a conservation organisation with two front doors. By having two front doors (the San Diego Zoo and the San Diego Zoo Safari Park), puts SDZWA in a unique position that allows the opportunity to interact with





our guests all while inspiring them to save species. This is not only a place to enjoy and learn with family and friends, but a place that allows us to see how we are all interconnected. We have conservation projects all over the world where we learn and share knowledge with teams in the field, and in return, they share with us, which helps to ensure the best possible care for animals to continue to help them to thrive.

BW: How has Covid-19 impacted the industry and are you seeing a shift in terms of business picking up?

EK: It was certainly a difficult time for everyone during the pandemic, but we persevered and came out of it stronger for doing so. This helped re-enforce the importance of zoos and aquariums in peoples' lives.

When we re-opened our gates, our guests and members were more than ready to return with open arms since we have continually provided a special experience for families... one that they wholeheartedly missed and were ready to get back to. In the end, I am happy to report that we are back to pre-Covid attendance and are seeing our membership grow and more tourists back in San Diego.

BW: What can we expect from the park moving forward?

EK: Our goal is to continue to focus on our commitment to saving species while providing a truly unique and amazing experience for our guests visiting us. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with younger audiences since school age children are critical within this conservation work, as they are the next generation to make an incredible impact. We look forward to providing more opportunities for them to engage in the conservation work while allowing them to be budding conservationists. With the opening of the Denny Sanford Wildlife Explorers Basecamp, it's a great place to allow them to start exploring nature. Finally, we will focus on strengthening our relationship with the community. We have a conservation project focused on the Southwest region, which can provide so many unique opportunities we can create about conservation. I look forward to sharing my passion for wildlife conservation to inspire others to support our critical work. Conservation is at the heart of everything we do. And it starts with that connection we make with people and wildlife every day. Because when wildlife thrives, all life thrives.

Personally Speaking

The first album I bought was... the soundtrack from the movie Grease.

The most interesting place I've ever been is... Antarctica.

The last book I read was... I re-read volume 1 of Sherlock Holmes.

This summer I plan to... travel to see friends and family.

If I wasn't working in the attractions industry I would... make sure to still be involved in helping drive conservation efforts by helping animals and the environment. The passion for this work that I have is so incredibly important to me, and I would want it to reflect in the work I do daily, even if not in the attractions industry.

The person who has influenced me the most is... I've been incredibly fortunate to have several role models in my life, my parents being the most influential. They were a huge inspiration in believing in myself all while strongly encouraging me to be part of something bigger... when all was said and done, leave the world a better place. Along with my parents, I have been fortunate enough to have several zoo directors whom I have admired, help guide me in my professional career. Combined, all these individuals have moulded and shaped me into the person I am today. Although growth happens on a daily basis, I am blessed to have them all on my team as my sounding board.





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